
PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN UPDATE



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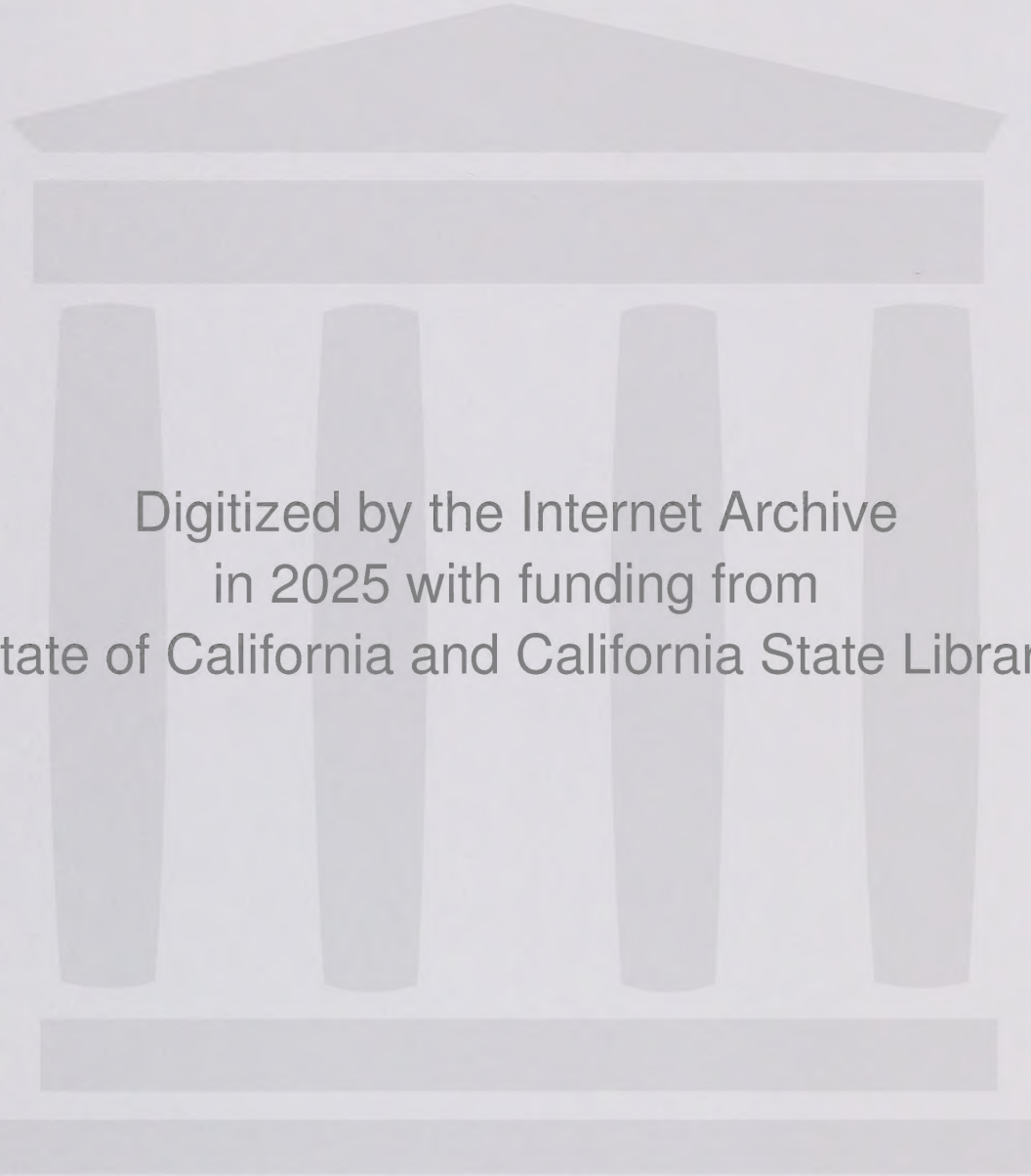
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA

ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT

Prepared by:

Crawford Multari & Starr
DKS Associates
Psomas and Associates
Jones & Stokes Associates
Recht Hausrath & Associates
J. Laurence Mintier & Associates

January 12, 1993



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INTRODUCTION

INTRODUCTION

Placer County initiated a comprehensive update of its General Plan in January 1991. The Update program is structured as a ten-phase process that is scheduled to be completed by late 1993. The following are the ten phases in the update process:

Phases 1 and 2	General Plan Update Startup
Phase 3	Update Initiation and Framework
Phase 4	Draft General Plan Background Report
Phase 5	Issues and Options Report
Phase 6	Draft General Plan Policy Document
Phase 7	Draft Environmental Impact Report
Phase 8	Public Review of Draft General Plan/EIR
Phase 9	Final General Plan/EIR
Phase 10	Final Documents

The first major report published as part of the Update program was the *Draft General Plan Background Report*, prepared during of Phase 4 and released for public review in October 1992. This report provides background information on all issues to be addressed in the new General Plan, focusing particularly on existing conditions and trends in Placer County. Copies of the *Draft Background Report* are available for review and/or purchase at the County Planning Department.

This *Issues and Options Report* was prepared as part of Phase 5 of the General Plan Update program. The purpose of this report is to solicit policy direction from the Board of Supervisors on key issues to be addressed in the General Plan Update. This direction will provide the framework for developing the goals, policies, implementation programs, and land use and circulation plans that will constitute the *Draft General Plan Policy Document* (Phase 6).

In preparing this *Issues and Options Report*, County Staff and Consultants identified the most critical policy issues to be addressed in the General Plan Update based on the findings of the *Draft General Plan Background Report* and other work undertaken in conjunction with the Update, including a series of townhall meetings conducted in November 1991. Staff and Consultants then identified two or more options for addressing these critical issues and analyzed the options for their potential implications.

The issues discussed in this report are of two types. First, to address specific growth and environmental issues, Chapter 1 discusses and poses options for several sets of policy/programmatic issues under the following headings:

- Land Use and Housing
- Transportation and Circulation
- Natural Resources
- Infrastructure
- Fiscal and Financial Issues

The second part of this report addresses three conceptual land use alternatives that represent broadly-defined choices for the overall pattern of future growth in Placer County:

- Alternative 1: New Growth Directed to Cities
- Alternative 2: Expansion of Established Communities
- Alternative 3: New Growth Area

The policy and program options discussed in Chapter 1 are generally independent of these land use alternatives, although some options may relate more directly to one or more of the land use alternatives.

The two chapters that discuss the three land use alternatives focus on two different aspects of the alternatives. Chapter 2 describes each alternative in terms of its distinguishing characteristics, its buildout holding capacity, and its estimated development potential in the year 2010. Chapter 3 assesses the implications of the three alternatives, emphasizing their comparative effects.

Appendix A to this report summarizes several major land use proposals that were submitted to the County during 1992 and assesses their relationship to the three land use alternatives described and analyzed in Chapters 2 and 3.

This report will be presented to the public in a series of six townhall meetings in January and February 1993 and will be the subject of a public hearing before the Board of Supervisors in February. The County welcomes both oral and written comments on this report. Following public hearing, the Board will deliberate and provide direction to County Staff and Consultants based on this *Issues and Options Report*.

Finally, it should be noted that this report does not include all of the issues to be addressed in the new General Plan. It focuses instead on only those issues judged by County Staff and Consultants to be the most critical for interim policy direction. The public, Planning Commission, and Board of Supervisors will have an opportunity to review and discuss the full range of General Plan issues and policies as part of the public review process following release of the *Draft General Plan Policy Document* and *Draft Environmental Impact Report* in Summer 1993.

CHAPTER 1

*CRITICAL ISSUES AND
ALTERNATIVE GENERAL PLAN RESPONSES*

CHAPTER 1

CRITICAL ISSUES AND ALTERNATIVE GENERAL PLAN RESPONSES

1.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter focuses on a series of issues that County Staff and Consultants feel require public discussion and formal consideration by the Board of Supervisors before the *Draft General Plan Policy Document* is prepared. County Staff and Consultants are soliciting direction from the Board regarding how to address each issue in the preparation of the *Draft Policy Document*. The issues raised in this chapter cover a range of concerns that in some cases represent distinct choices regarding specific approaches to addressing key issues in the *Draft Policy Document* and in other cases represent broader philosophical choices that will help form the foundation of the *General Plan*. The issues discussed in this chapter are grouped into five major areas of topical concern: (1) Land Use and Housing; (2) Transportation and Circulation; (3) Natural Resources; (4) Infrastructure; and (5) Fiscal and Financial Issues.

For each topic presented in this chapter, the discussion is broken into three sections. The first section describes the issue and highlights its importance as it relates to the County's future generally, and the new General Plan specifically. The second part of each discussion poses key questions raised by the issue. Finally, the third section of each discussion frames the options for dealing with each issue within the context of the General Plan.

1.2 LAND USE AND HOUSING

JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE

Issue Summary

During the last decade, increasing traffic congestion and housing costs became major concerns in the urban areas of California. Analysis of the relationship between jobs and housing is one method frequently used to evaluate the impact of a community's land use decisions on these two regional problems. In its simplest form, the jobs-housing balance analysis focuses on the ratio of the number of jobs available in a particular area to the number of employed residents. In an ideal situation, there would be one job for every employed resident. This "balance" between jobs in a community and workers in the community to fill those jobs would, in theory, allow residents the opportunity to work in their community, thereby reducing long-distance commuting. The closer a community can come to achieving balance, the better it will be able to address regional transportation and housing cost problems. A ratio of greater than 1.0 means there are more jobs than employed residents, so workers have to commute in from other communities; conversely, a ratio of less than 1.0 means there are fewer jobs than employed residents, so some residents have to commute to jobs in other communities.

For the purposes of the new General Plan, the jobs-housing balance issue primarily concerns the relationship between the amount of land designated for employment-generating development (jobs) and the amount of land designated for residential development (housing). Ideally, land would be designated in a manner that would allow for a one-to-one relationship between local jobs and employed residents.

According to the 1990 Census, Placer County had approximately 65,800 jobs and 82,800 employed residents. The ratio of jobs-to-employed residents ratio, therefore, was 0.80, indicating that there were

fewer jobs available in the county than employed residents to fill them. As a result, at least 17,000 Placer County residents were commuting to jobs outside of the county. The Census indicated that a high percentage of these commuters lived in the southern part of the county, so they were likely to be commuting to jobs in Sacramento County.

While it indicates an imbalance between *existing* non-residential and residential development, the Census data do not reflect how this relationship could change in the future based on existing plans and zoning. According to tabulations of zoning prepared for the General Plan Update, there is a vast amount of vacant land designated for both non-residential and residential development. For instance in the unincorporated South Placer area, approximately 80 acres of land are currently occupied by commercial development and 325 acres are occupied by industrial development. By contrast, a total of approximately 300 acres are zoned for commercial development and almost 4,000 acres are zoned for industrial development. This "oversupply" of land designated for employment-generating development suggests that, in Placer County, the imbalance between local jobs and employed residents is not the result of an inadequate supply of non-residentially-zoned land. It instead indicates that market forces have directed commercial and industrial development elsewhere in the region.

Another important aspect of the jobs-housing balance issue is the geographic scope of the analysis. The countywide ratio between jobs and employed residents does not reveal differences in the jobs-housing ratio within sub-regions of Placer County. Depending on how areas of analysis are defined, the results can be interpreted differently. For instance, if a jobs-housing analysis were to focus only on the western part of Placer County, there would appear to be significant imbalance, since the Census data indicate that there is a significantly higher number of employed residents than jobs. If, however the western part of Placer County were combined with parts of Sacramento County, the larger geographic area might appear to be pretty well balanced. These examples illustrate how important it is to address the jobs-housing balance in the context of geographic units that would help inform better decision-making.

While jobs-housing balance discussions typically focus on the quantitative aspects of the issue, qualitative concerns are equally critical. While an objective of creating quantitative balance (i.e., a ratio of one job for every employed resident) is commendable, the type of housing available within a given geographic area should also match the type of jobs available. For instance, if a community's employment base is geared toward lower-income jobs, then the local housing stock should include ample lower-cost units, and vice-versa. If affordable housing is not available, then lower-income wage earners will have to reside outside the area and commute, thereby contributing to traffic congestion and limiting the size of the local labor pool. Such conditions might compel new employers or employers wishing to expand their operations to relocate to areas that could provide affordable housing for their employees and/or to areas without a restricted labor supply.

As a practical matter, even if there were a perfect jobs-housing balance in the county, there could still be substantial commuting into and out of the county. People choose places of residence for a variety of reasons, only one of which is proximity to work. They may choose to commute to other areas away from where their residences for reasons of salary, skills required, or working conditions. Nevertheless, the pursuit of jobs-housing balance in land use planning is useful because it can help reduce commuting and its associated problems (i.e., traffic congestion, poor air quality).

Key Questions

The above discussion raises important questions that the County needs to address in the new General Plan.

- Does the County want to directly address the jobs-housing balance issue in the context of the General Plan?
- How can the County regulate the jobs-housing relationship in both quantitative and qualitative terms?
- What is the appropriate geographic context for addressing jobs-housing balance? Community plan? County sub-regions? Countywide? Sacramento region?
- Should Placer County function as a supplier of housing for workers in other communities, or should each community be responsible for meeting its own needs?
- Given that Placer County has more than enough land designated to accommodate development that could employ all of its residents, yet at least 17,000 residents still commute out of the county, how can the County influence future development to promote job-generating uses? What factors are limiting the development of employment-generating uses?

General Plan Options

The questions posed above suggest very basic choices about if and how the County wants to address the jobs-housing balance in the new General Plan. The following options present two basic approaches to answering these questions.

Option 1: Allow Market Forces to Dictate Jobs-Housing Balance: Under this option, the County would address the jobs-housing balance in the General Plan only as it is reflected in the land use diagram. While the County could designate appropriate amounts of land for residential and employment uses, no specific policies or standards would be incorporated in the plan, although some statement about how the County views itself in terms of the regional employment and residential market would be appropriate. This approach would not necessarily imply that the County does not consider the issue important; it instead would express a County preference for reliance on market forces to shape the relationship between employment-generating uses and residential development. Under this option, the County would, nonetheless, continue to implement economic development programs to attract employment-generating development.

Option 2: Adopt General Plan Jobs-Housing Balance Policies and Programs: This option would call for the County to incorporate specific jobs-housing balance policies and standards in the General Plan with the objective of influencing market activity. In doing this, the County would have to clearly define its terms, including a geographic frame of reference, an acceptable jobs-to-housing ratio, and the methods of implementation (i.e., through general plan amendments, rezonings, project review). The County would also have to set up some sort of monitoring mechanism to track employment and residential growth. These activities would supplement the County's ongoing economic development programs.

UNINCORPORATED EMPLOYMENT BASE

Issue Summary

In June 1990, the County adopted the *Placer County Economic Development Strategy* to guide its future economic development activities. The *Strategy* concludes that, to continue to provide a diversity of employment opportunities for the residents of Placer County, the County must focus on attracting and retaining higher-paying manufacturing and professional office jobs.

According to the *Economic Development Strategy*, Placer County's business attraction efforts should focus on attracting employment opportunities for primary wage earners and on expanding opportunities for resource-based industries. Much of the recent employment growth in Placer County has occurred in the service and retail sectors, which have grown in response to consumer demand created by residential development. The jobs created at these retail and service establishments are, however, generally low-skill and pay low wages. Many of the employment opportunities for primary wage earners are located elsewhere in the region. Providing more primary wage earner job opportunities in Placer County could reduce regional traffic congestion and air pollution. The failure to attract businesses supporting primary wage earner employment to unincorporated Placer County has also resulted in the loss to the County of the fiscal benefits associated with such development.

Recognizing the problems associated with the type of employment growth that has occurred in the county, the *Economic Development Strategy* includes generalized goals for three geographic areas of the county: South Placer, the Foothills, and the High Sierra. For both South Placer and the Foothills, the report states the County should "provide primary wage earner job opportunities . . . to encourage residents not to commute to Sacramento" and "ensure retention of some undeveloped industrially-zoned land for future use." For the Foothills, the report also promotes "continued employment opportunities in the resource based industries." The principal goal for the High Sierra is "to help businesses create tourist and recreational facilities that extend the tourist season."

In the South Placer area, the principal opportunity for employment-generating development in the unincorporated area is in the Sunset area. The County's community plan for the area, the *Sunset General Plan*, designates land along the Highway 65 corridor as Industrial and Industrial Reserve, which could accommodate a substantial amount of development providing jobs for primary wage earners. Development in this area, however, has been hindered by various development constraints (e.g., natural resources, insufficient transportation facilities, and inadequate fire protection services) and because it falls within the spheres of influence of the Cities of Roseville and Rocklin, creating uncertainty about long-term development policy.

The bulk of unincorporated development in the Foothills area is within the area covered by the *Auburn-Bowman Community Plan*, where the County has planned for substantial commercial, office, and industrial development. In the recent update of the *Auburn-Bowman Community Plan*, the County addressed disparities between local jobs and local housing opportunities by increasing the amount of land designated for employment-generating uses.

In the eastern part of the county, employment is based primarily on the recreation and tourist industries, which provide relatively few primary-wage-earner employment opportunities. This part of the county has few economic development opportunities aside from those related to the recreation and tourist industries.

Key Questions

Relatively strong economic growth in Placer County has obscured some problems regarding County policy towards business and industrial development. For instance, locations in Placer County cities have proved more attractive to large employers—particularly larger manufacturing and distribution and, more recently, office activities—than have competing locations in the unincorporated area, primarily in the Sunset area. In addition, the County's *Economic Development Strategy* is aimed at marketing Placer County as a whole and does not include strong policy statements that would favor development in the unincorporated area of the southern part of the county. This raises some questions regarding how the County should be planning for future business and industrial development in its unincorporated areas.

- Should the Sunset area be the primary location for future unincorporated employment-generating development in South Placer? Are there other areas that might also be appropriate? If so, where?
- If the County wants to aggressively pursue development of employment-generating uses in the Sunset area, should it petition LAFCO to have the area removed from the spheres of influence of Roseville, Rocklin, and Lincoln?
- Are there opportunities for new employment-generating development in the Foothill area of the county in addition to those identified in the *Draft Auburn-Bowman Community Plan*? If so, what kind of development and where?
- How should the County try to attract new employment-generating development? Should it simply make suitable land available through appropriate zoning, and then let market demand drive the type of development that locates in Placer County? Or should the County aggressively recruit development to the unincorporated area that would enhance the local employment base?

General Plan Options

The questions posed above raise fundamental concerns for how and where the County plans for future employment growth. Under any circumstances, County Planning Staff should work with the County's Economic Development Coordinator to ensure that the County approaches economic development planning and land use planning with a commonly-recognized set goals and objectives.

Option 1: Limit Employment Development Opportunities to Existing Plans: Under this option, the County would essentially maintain current plans for commercial and industrial development. The most important part of the county under this approach would be the Sunset area. If the County envisions expansion of Placer County's unincorporated area employment base for primary wage earners, the County could petition the Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) to have the area removed from city spheres of influence (SOI). Currently, most of the area is within the spheres of Roseville, Rocklin, and Lincoln, which implies that development would eventually annex to those cities. If, however, the Sunset area were excluded from the cities' SOIs, it would develop under County jurisdiction, and the County would reap the benefits associated with the development. On the other hand, continued development in the Sunset area under County jurisdiction would require the County to ensure that adequate services are available and that sensitive natural resources are protected. As far as the Foothills area is concerned, most of the significant job growth in the unincorporated area is likely to occur in the area covered by the *Draft Auburn-Bowman Community Plan*. The County anticipates that the policies and programs contained in the *Draft Auburn-Bowman Plan* will adequately address economic development planning needs in the area.

Option 2: Expand Employment Development Opportunities in the General Plan Update: Under this option, the County would designate new unincorporated areas for employment-generating uses. In doing so, the County Planning Department would work with the County's Economic Development Coordinator to identify appropriate areas for particular types of commercial, office, and industrial development. The County would also have to consider other issues associated with opening up new areas, such as the provision of services and effects on natural resources.

HOUSING

When the County initiated the General Plan Update, it was aware that State law regarding the adoption of general plan housing elements would require that some housing-related issues would have to be treated differently from the rest of the plan. Specifically, the County's Consultants accelerated their work related to housing so that the County could meet the July 1, 1992, deadline for adoption of a revised Housing Element. The first formal step in this process was the preparation of an *Issues and Options Report* dealing exclusively with housing. This report, which was discussed at two joint meetings of the Board of Supervisors and Planning Commission in March 1992, outlined basic housing element requirements, explained the update process, reviewed housing needs within the county, described the County's existing housing programs, and—most importantly—presented several options about the future role of Placer County in the provision of affordable housing for its residents. Based on the direction received from the Board and Commission at their joint meetings, the Consultants prepared the *Draft Housing Element*, which was submitted to the State Department of Housing and Community Development (HCD) for its statutorily-mandated review. Following HCD's review, the *Draft Element* was revised to respond to their comments. The Planning Commission held a public hearing on April 28, 1992, that resulted in a recommendation to the Board of Supervisors to adopt the *Element*. The Board held another public hearing on June 22, 1992, at which it formally adopted the revised *Element*, thereby complying with the July 1, 1992, deadline for adoption. On September 21, 1992, the County received a letter from HCD formally stating that the *Housing Element* complies with State housing element law.

It should be noted that County Staff and Consultants anticipate that the *Housing Element* will be revised again as part of the overall General Plan Update when the remaining elements are prepared in the summer of 1993. The policies and programs contained in these other elements will likely affect the *Housing Element*, and will, therefore, require that adopted housing policies and programs be adjusted to maintain consistency. County Staff and Consultants do not anticipate that the adjustments will be substantial.

1.3 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

REGIONAL TRANSPORTATION FACILITIES

Issue Summary

Interstate 80, which is the only east-west interstate freeway crossing the Sierras and Cascades in a 1,000-mile stretch between Bakersfield on the south, and Portland, Oregon, on the north, bisects Placer County. Interregional and interstate business, freight, tourist, and recreation travel between the Pacific Coast, the San Joaquin and Sacramento Valleys, and points east rely heavily on I-80. In addition, it also serves as an important commuter route in South Placer County, and it provides the only major route connecting the western and eastern parts of the county. As a result, the economic well-being and quality of life of not only communities along I-80, but much of Northern California is heavily dependent on this highway.

As the urban areas of Northern California continue to grow, so will the volume of traffic on I-80 through Placer County. While, in most of the county, Placer County development will contribute only a small percentage of this volume, the total increase in traffic will have a significant effect on residents and businesses throughout the county. Recognizing the inevitable increases in traffic in the I-80 corridor, several studies have been undertaken to identify possible solutions to anticipated problems. For Placer County, the most important of these are the *Route 102 Feasibility Study* and the *Southeast Area Transportation Study (SATS)*.

Route 102, as generally conceived, would run from State Route 99 near I-5 and the Sacramento Metropolitan Airport to the north and east to connect with I-80 in Placer County, thereby allowing east-west traffic to bypass the Sacramento metropolitan area. In October 1988, the California Transportation Commission (CTC) requested the California Department of Transportation (Caltrans) to conduct a preliminary feasibility study for the route. This request was based on recommendations from the Placer County Transportation Commission (PCTC) and the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG). The study, which was completed in February 1991, identified numerous possible alignments running through the western part of Placer County. After a series of public meetings on the study, Caltrans selected four alignments for further analysis. Three of these alternative routes run all the way from SR 99 to I-80 near Auburn, while a fourth runs only from SR 99 to Highway 65. In October 1991, the CTC initiated a multi-modal transportation corridor study to identify future improvements to the I-80 corridor between Colfax and Davis. This study is scheduled to begin in Spring 1993, and is expected to result in a determination of whether or not the I-80 corridor can adequately accommodate traffic that might otherwise use Route 102 (i.e., whether or not Route 102 is necessary).

In June 1990, the Placer County Board of Supervisors adopted two resolutions regarding Route 102, one opposing the three SR 99 to I-80 alternative routes and one supporting the postponement of the initial feasibility study for the Route 102 multi-modal corridor. The latter resolution stated that the County preferred to have an I-80 corridor rail/public transportation plan formulated, implemented, and tested before proceeding with further analysis of Route 102.

Another major regional transportation study affecting Placer County, the *Southeast Area Transportation Study*, began in the Spring of 1992. The SATS is evaluating prospective transportation problems and investigating alternative solutions in a "beltway" corridor that would link I-80, Highway 50, State Route 99, and I-5, thereby bypassing downtown Sacramento to the east. The SATS will define the demand for short and long distance travel in the eastern and southern parts of the Sacramento region and explore the likely effectiveness of travel demand management programs and transit and roadway improvements in addressing that demand. The Placer County Board of Supervisors has decided not to participate in the SATS, expressing concern for the effects that a beltway would have on the southern part of Placer County, between Highway 50 and I-80.

Key Questions

While the County has formally stated positions concerning both the Route 102 study and the *Southeast Area Transportation Study*, the General Plan Update provides an opportunity to either reaffirm or reconsider these positions. The following questions frame these concerns very simply.

- Does the County want to reaffirm its position regarding Route 102 as expressed in the Board of Supervisors June 1990 resolution (i.e., study improvements to I-80 prior to considering Route 102)? Or does it want to reconsider its position?
- Does the County want to reaffirm its position regarding the *Southeast Area Transportation Study* as expressed by the Board of Supervisors? Or does it want to reconsider its position?

General Plan Options

The following options represent broad choices that will have important implications for the preparation of the new General Plan.

Option 1: Support the I-80 Multi-Modal Transportation Study/Oppose Further Route 102 Study:

In its June 1990 resolution, the Board of Supervisors expressed support for formulation, implementation, and testing of improvements to the I-80 corridor. These include improvements to both roadway facilities and the public transportation network. Under this option, the County would continue to oppose further study of the Route 102 corridor until the findings of the I-80 study are available.

Option 2: Study Long-Term Opportunities for an East-West Roadway in Western County: Under this option, the County would generally support further study of a future east-west roadway in the western part of Placer County. This option would recognize that there could be a need for such a facility in the future to serve either local or regional traffic demand, although it would not imply County endorsement of any particular roadway type, size, or alignment.

Option 3: Oppose Study of a Southeast Beltway through Placer County: This option would reaffirm the County's position regarding the *Southeast Area Transportation Study*. That is, because of the possible negative effects on the southern part of the Placer County, the County would oppose the development of a beltway from Highway 50 north to I-80.

Option 4: Study Long-Term Opportunities for a North-South Roadway in the Southern County: Under this option, the County would generally support further study of a future north-south roadway in the southern part of Placer County. This option would recognize that there could be a need for such a facility in the future to serve either local or regional traffic demand, although it would not imply County endorsement of any particular roadway type, size, or alignment.

TRANSPORTATION/LAND USE RELATIONSHIP**Issue Summary**

Two of the most important components of any general plan are the land use element and the circulation element, including the land use and circulation plan diagrams or maps. The land use element designates the general distribution and intensity of uses of the land for the full range of development types anticipated to be necessary or desirable within the county. The circulation element, which by law must be correlated with the land use element, identifies the general location and extent of existing and proposed major roadways, transportation routes, terminals, and other local public utilities and facilities. The manner in which the two relate to one another makes an important local public policy statement.

The process of developing land use and circulation elements to accurately and realistically reflect the needs and desires of Placer County is a challenge that requires careful evaluation of those needs and desires. On one hand, the County needs to assess what sort of market demand is likely to prevail over the time frame of the new General Plan (i.e., through 2010). Historical trends and development forecasts indicate that overall demand for development in Placer County is likely to be strong. On the residential side, there are two principal market forces operating. The urban areas of the southern part of the county will continue to attract residents who find Placer County's suburban residential opportunities more attractive than others available in the Sacramento region. In addition, there is also a significant component of demand from retirees and others attracted by the rural residential quality of life in the county. The demand for industrial, office, and retail development in Placer County is expected to continue at the strong pace of the 1980s. Demand is likely to be strongest in the longer-term as other locations in the region become less attractive and as large firms interested in developing major facilities at lower costs near a large labor pool and near major transportation systems choose to locate in Placer County.

While the preparation of the land use element requires careful consideration of the likely market demand for different types of development, the preparation of the circulation element requires the identification of the transportation system that the County determines will best serve its residents and workers, while meeting other local objectives (e.g., traffic congestion reduction and air quality improvement). The circulation element will reflect a combination of reliance on roadways (i.e., automobiles) and use of transit (i.e., bus and/or rail). Historically, development in Placer County, particularly the unincorporated areas, has relied almost exclusively on the automobile. Transit services continue to be limited and are not well connected to the regional network. Transportation planning has, therefore, focused on the development of a roadway network to accommodate automobiles, rather than on transit development.

Five public transportation providers currently operate in Placer County, all of which provide bus service for the general public on fixed or "deviated" routes. Expansion of the existing bus services (in terms of service area and hours of operation) will be necessary to accommodate anticipated growth in Placer County. In addition to planning for expansion of existing bus services, various transportation planning efforts have identified the need for establishing or enhancing rail service, including light rail, intercity rail, and commuter rail.

The County's 1992 *Congestion Management Plan* (CMP) established transit standards to define the minimum level of service that transit operators in the county should provide. The CMP's transit routing standards focus on travel corridors to provide transit operators with maximum flexibility in locating service routes within each corridor. The designated transit corridors, which center on Interstate 80, Highway 49, Highway 65, Highway 28, and Highway 89, represent the areas with the greatest potential for transit to capture a significant number of commuters.

In considering the future relationship between land use planning and transportation planning, the County needs to recognize one key fact: the pattern and density of development will determine the feasibility of different modes of transportation. The low-density, dispersed type of development that has occurred in Placer County's unincorporated areas in the past is not conducive to the efficient provision of transit services, either rail or bus. For transit systems to operate effectively and efficiently, development along transit corridors must be relatively dense and concentrated.

Key Questions

Given the market demand anticipated during the time frame of the new General Plan, the County must address some significant questions about how it prefers to see the relationship between transportation and land use evolve in the future.

- Does the County want to continue designating land in the unincorporated areas to accommodate the demand for low-density suburban and rural residential development? Or does it want to designate land in a more dense, concentrated fashion so as to support successful transit services?
- If the County chooses to continue with less dense, more dispersed development patterns, does it want to focus that development along existing roadways? Or does it want to designate development for new areas that would require major new roadways?
- If the County decides to foster the kind of high-density, concentrated development that is essential for successful transit services, does it want to rely solely on flexible-route (bus) services, or does it want to pursue the development of fixed-route (rail) services in the unincorporated part of Placer County?

General Plan Options

The questions posed above imply a major choice between two basic alternatives for the designation of land and the planning of a future circulation system, both of which primarily affect the southern part of the county since this is the area expected to absorb most of the county's growth.

Option 1: Promote Low-Density, Dispersed Development Relying on Automobiles: This option would continue the historical pattern of development in Placer County; that is, lower-density development catering to the strong market for suburban and rural residential development. Since transit services would be difficult to provide with such a development pattern, the County would have to plan for roadway capacity adequate to serve what will probably be very high volumes of automobile traffic. This could mean designating land to take advantage of existing roadway facilities, adding additional capacity as necessary, or opening up new areas for development, thereby necessitating the development of major new roadway facilities. Taking advantage of existing facilities would probably be more cost efficient, but would also likely result in greater traffic congestion and the problems associated with this congestion (e.g., poor air quality). Opening up new areas would lessen the burden on existing roadways, but would require greater expenditures on roadway construction. The County would have to determine what type of facilities would be necessary based on the location and amount of land designated for new development; this could range from developing new arterial connections to the existing roadway network to constructing major new facilities (i.e., Route 102, Southeast Area Beltway). Opening up new development areas would also result in conversion of agricultural areas, which could induce further growth in unincorporated Placer County.

Option 2: Promote High-Density, Concentrated Development Relying on Transit: Under this option, the County would depart from the historical development pattern in Placer County by designating land for urban uses in concentrations high enough to support the development of transit services. An important feature of this option would be the designation of "high quality" transit corridors for bus or rail services. These corridors could be located along existing and proposed rail lines and along freeways or major arterials where express bus service could link major activity centers and where there is sufficient developable or redevelopable land to accommodate high density residential and employment development. In Placer County, these corridors would likely be designed to facilitate bus service in the short term, but flexible enough to accommodate rail services when development patterns and densities are suitable for such services. This approach could focus on increasing density in already-developed areas along existing corridors (i.e., infill), or it could identify new areas for development that could easily be connected to existing corridors. Selection of this option would imply the County's interest in participating in the development of a transit network, either bus or rail; such participation would require the expenditure of public funds for planning and development of transit, most likely in conjunction with other local transit service providers. Selection of this option would also imply the promulgation of standards for new development that would contribute to the likelihood of successful transit operations. These might include requirements for convenient pedestrian and bicycle linkages to transit corridors and stations and ensuring that new development is designed to accommodate transit.

1.4 NATURAL RESOURCES

AGRICULTURAL RESOURCE PROTECTION

Issue Summary

Although agriculture remains an important sector of Placer County's economy, it has begun to decline in relative importance in recent years as the manufacturing, recreation, service, and construction industries

have grown. Agriculture's decline is reflected in a gradual reduction in the acreage of harvested farmland (from 275,000 in 1980 to 250,000 in 1990) and a corresponding reduction in the value of agricultural production. The decline in agricultural acreage and production is the result of urban growth (within the cities) and rural residential development (primarily in the western part of the county), as well as changes in the economy, government regulations, and the cost of producing and transporting agricultural products.

In 1989, the County made a strong commitment to supporting agriculture in Placer County by adopting the *Agricultural Element* and, at the same time, enacting a right-to-farm ordinance. The *Agricultural Element* incorporates policies designed to improve the viability of agricultural operations and promote the conservation of agricultural land. The *Element* provides that the conversion of agricultural land to non-agricultural uses shall be allowed only where a "clear and immediate need" can be demonstrated, based on population projections and a shortage of other land more suitable for development or non-agricultural use. The *Agricultural Element* policies further state that such conversions shall be allowed only where the property has been identified in the adopted spheres of influence for a city as appropriate for non-agricultural uses, and that the lands will be maintained in large (20-acre or greater) parcel sizes until they are annexed to a city. The *Element* states that the County will discourage urbanization outside of adopted spheres of influence, and that urban limit lines shall be maintained to provide incentives for the continued use of farmland located just beyond these urban boundaries. The *Agricultural Element* also includes a land use map that supplements and reflects the *Element's* policies by designating land for agricultural development in four categories according to permitted minimum parcel size (10-, 20-, 40-, and 80-acres). These designations cover most of the rural portions of the county outside of the boundaries of the County's community plan areas.

In conjunction with adoption of the *Agricultural Element*, the County adopted a right-to-farm ordinance. The ordinance is intended to help reduce the loss of commercial agricultural resources in the county and to limit the circumstances under which agricultural operations may be deemed to constitute a nuisance. The ordinance does so by defining existing agricultural activities and commercial agricultural operations and directing that prospective purchasers of land adjacent to existing agricultural operations be notified that the County supports the continuation of these activities. Effectively, the ordinance tells newcomers that the agricultural uses "were here first" and the newcomers should be prepared to tolerate some potential nuisances related to agricultural operations.

Key Questions

Recognizing that the County has already adopted a very strong set of policies regarding agricultural land protection, but that agricultural land continues to be converted to urban uses, the County may wish to reassess the success of its policies and activities. The following questions should help focus this reassessment.

- Is the continued loss of farmland an inevitable and appropriate result of the urbanization of the western part of the county? If not, what can the County do to better protect its agricultural resources?
- Are existing policies strong enough, or should they be strengthened? Have the existing policies been in effect long enough to determine their influence on agricultural land conversion?

General Plan Options

The questions posed above suggest a larger question about the County's role in the protection of its agricultural resources. If the County is satisfied with its existing agricultural protection policies, then the

implications both for the General Plan Update and for the manner in which the County oversees development are minimal, since agricultural preservation policies in the *Agricultural Element* would be included in the new plan. If, on the other hand, the County decides to reassess its position regarding agricultural land and production, there are several measures that it could undertake, depending on how active (or activist) it wants to be. The following options describe varying levels of County involvement in the protection of its agricultural resources.

Option 1: Reaffirm Existing Agricultural Protection Policies and Programs: Under this option, the County would carry its current body of regulations and policies forward into the new General Plan, perhaps with some evaluation of how effective individual policies and programs have been. For instance, the right-to-farm ordinance might be modified to ensure better protection to farmers, or policies regulating the subdivision of agriculturally-designated land could be strengthened. In an effort to more clearly communicate its existing pro-agriculture policies, the County might also initiate an educational program to inform those involved in agricultural production, residents, and prospective developers of how those policies are intended to operate. This option assumes that the County's current regulations and policies adequately reflect its preferred level of involvement. This option might also imply that the loss of agricultural land that has been occurring recently in Placer County is an acceptable result of permitting new urban and suburban development.

Option 2: Adopt More Aggressive Agricultural Protection Policies and Programs: This option would increase the level of County commitment to agricultural land protection and would involve active sponsorship of more aggressive protection programs. For example, the County might support economic development programs to assist local farmers with the marketing and distribution of Placer County products. To prevent or discourage agricultural land from converting to urban uses, this could also include the use of such techniques as purchase of development rights (PDR), transfer of development rights (TDR), and acquisition of easements. These programs would not in themselves guarantee continued agricultural production, but would prevent the land from developing with uses incompatible with agricultural production. These programs would also involve substantial County involvement in program development and administration and, in some cases, expenditure of funds. A PDR program, for instance, would require a funding source, which might include public financing or a development fee program. A public financing program could include a sales tax increase, which would require public approval. While gaining public approval for such a tax increase would be difficult, it would provide the County with a clear mandate regarding public views on the value of agricultural land and development. Increasing development fees to fund agricultural protection programs would probably also meet with strong resistance from development interests. Selection of this option would imply that the County's current policy and program commitments are not sufficient to adequately protect agricultural land.

Option 3: Redesignate Appropriate Agricultural Areas for Urban/Suburban Uses: This option would respond to property owner proposals to make more land available for urban and suburban development in the unincorporated areas of Placer County. If this option were chosen, the County would identify an appropriate area or areas of currently-designated, less productive agricultural land for development. For those remaining areas with agricultural designations, the provisions of either of the first two options would be appropriate. While this option would ultimately result directly in the conversion of farmland, it might also relieve pressure on other more productive farmland to convert by clearly directing development to where the County finds it most appropriate or desirable. On the other hand, it might give owners of land adjacent to newly-opened areas the impression that the County will continue to allow agricultural land to be converted for development of non-agricultural uses.

OPEN SPACE AND HABITAT PRESERVATION

Issue Summary

Placer County includes a substantial amount open space land that can be classified according to three general categories. The first is private and public land that is used for the managed production of natural resources; this includes land in agricultural or timberland preserves. The second type of open space land in Placer County is land that is formally managed as open space to preserve natural resources (e.g., wetlands) and provide for outdoor recreation (e.g. parks). The third category of open space land consists of undeveloped land that is not formally designated as open space, but serves open space purposes. These informal, or "de facto," open space areas include agricultural land not under agricultural preserve protection and undeveloped private land that is constrained for development by limited access or difficult topography; this category of land is not protected from immediate or future conversion to urban or suburban uses.

Many of Placer County's open space areas, both formal and informal, serve as habitat areas for sensitive vegetation communities, including wetlands of all types (i.e., streamsidess, vernal pools, seeps, springs, and meadows), valley oak and blue oak woodlands, and old growth conifer forests. These vegetation communities in turn support a multitude of sensitive or endangered species.

A myriad of state and federal laws, regulations, and policies affect the management or development of sensitive open space and wetlands in Placer County. These are administered primarily by the State Department of Fish and Game (DFG), United States Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS), and Army Corps of Engineers (Corps). Many of these regulations and policies have been developed as ad-hoc responses to species-specific impacts on an individual project basis. These ad-hoc responses, unfortunately, provide little direction for comprehensive open space or habitat protection. A major impetus for a more comprehensive approach has developed through local government efforts to develop measures to more consistently and systematically deal with development project impacts. Placer County's ongoing effort to develop a wetland mitigation banking program is an example of active intervention by a local agency to develop a larger context for protection of open space and habitat resources. The United States Fish and Wildlife Service and the California Department of Fish and Game have been supportive of Placer County's efforts specifically, and of local government involvement in regional conservation planning efforts generally.

Key Questions

Given that the federal, state, and local institutional framework for addressing open space and habitat resources is relatively loose, there are several questions regarding the County's involvement in future efforts to protect these resources.

- What does the County view as its most valuable open space and habitat resources? Grassland? Oak woodland? Conifer woodland? Hardwood forest? Chaparral and shrub? Riparian? Wetlands? Agricultural areas?
- Are the County's existing policies regarding open space and resource protection strong enough or clear enough? If not, how can they be strengthened or clarified?
- What can the County do to better protect its open space resources? Unilateral local action? Initiation of, or cooperation with, regional efforts?

- Is the continued loss of open space land and habitat an inevitable and appropriate result of the urbanization of the western part of the county?

General Plan Options

The questions posed above focus on three fundamental issues: evaluation of local open space and habitat resources; establishment of County policy regarding these resources; and the level of County involvement in open space and habitat protection. The following options represent a range of County choices regarding these issues.

Option 1: Defer Oversight of Habitat Preservation to Federal and State Agencies: Currently, the regulations most directly affecting habitat preservation are promulgated and enforced by federal and state agencies. In this scheme, local governments play a relatively minor role, unless they voluntarily make special efforts to address these issues on a regional basis. Under this option, the County would maintain its current approach, which consists principally of project-by-project review and analysis of habitat disturbance or loss, but would continue with its ongoing wetlands protection efforts.

Option 2: Establish Strong County Preservation Policies: Under this option, the County would establish a strong set of local policies to protect and preserve those resources it considers most valuable. The County's commitment would be a policy-based expression of the County's philosophy, without an active program-based implementation effort. For instance, the County could adopt a "no-net-loss" policy for specific habitat or open space resources, leaving it up to project proponents to implement policies on a case-by-case basis. Another component of the option could be a commitment to a study or ongoing program to identify the location and relative importance of open space lands that are critical for sensitive habitat and recreation needs. Ideally, such an effort would be implemented in cooperation with all agencies and organizations with an interest in open space preservation in the county. The County's Open Space, Wetlands, and Riparian Areas Committee could provide guidance for this study.

Option 3: Initiate Active County Involvement in Habitat Preservation: Under this option, the County would initiate an aggressive comprehensive habitat conservation program. Because much habitat protection regulation is the responsibility of federal and state agencies, this approach would require that the County identify and initiate cooperative planning efforts with public and private agencies and organizations who have an institutional interest in habitat preservation in Placer County. These groups might include the United States Fish and Wildlife Service, California Department of Fish and Game, the Army Corps of Engineers, United States Forest Service (both El Dorado and Tahoe Districts), the cities, special districts (such as the recreation and public utilities districts), the Placer Land Trust, and other conservation organizations. The County could initiate joint planning efforts using memoranda of understanding that establish the institutional objectives and commitments of each participant. The County could also sponsor the formation of a regional open space district or a joint powers authority to permanently focus tax money and planning resources on countywide efforts.

1.5 INFRASTRUCTURE

WATER SUPPLY

Issue Summary

The issue of water supply in Placer County is fundamentally a question of the extent to which development should rely on groundwater or surface water. Several factors affect both groundwater and surface water sources and delivery of water.

Surface water sources currently supply most of the water being used in Placer County. The county currently has ample surface water, in terms of both supply and the rights to develop the supply, to support all existing and currently planned development. While local surface water is plentiful, its use in many areas is problematical. First, development of major infrastructure (i.e., treatment and transmission facilities) is necessary for its distribution and use. Second, recent amendments to the Federal Safe Drinking Water Act, including regulations concerning treatment of surface water (the Surface Water Treatment Rule) have increased the cost of developing surface water resources. To compound these difficulties, funding for water treatment plant improvements necessary to meet water quality standards is, and will likely remain, scarce.

Developing surface water supplies also raises the question of how best to deliver water to its users. Currently, there are approximately 170 entities delivering water in Placer County, including cities, special districts, community associations, utility companies, and private water companies. For the most part, these agencies rely on surface water rights held by the Bureau of Reclamation, Pacific Gas and Electric Company, the Nevada Irrigation District, and Placer County.

While reliance on groundwater is less prevalent than reliance on surface water in Placer County, some rural and remote areas of the county effectively have no other economically viable source of supply. Over half of the county's large water systems (systems with over 200 users) rely to some extent, if not entirely, on groundwater for supply. Groundwater is also the primary source of supply for agricultural irrigation in the western part of the county. Groundwater sources are often more attractive than surface water for several reasons, including lower costs for permitting, transmission, treatment, and distribution, although the cost of power to pump groundwater is increasing. The adequacy of groundwater supply and quality to serve new development is, however, a significant concern because of limited information regarding aquifer boundaries, safe yield potentials, and quality. Furthermore, the cumulative effects of groundwater use and contamination are not well understood.

While groundwater supply in the valley portions of the western county area appears to be generally good in terms of both quantity and quality, in some areas of the county (e.g., the Auburn-Bowman and the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan Areas), there is evidence of poor groundwater quality and overdrafting. There is also evidence that urban and agricultural development in Sacramento and Sutter Counties adjacent to the western and southern borders of Placer County is overdrafting groundwater resources, thereby exacerbating Placer County's localized problems. Groundwater availability is uncertain in the foothills and is very limited in the mountains.

In addition to the problems of water supply for urban and suburban uses, there are significant problems concerning water supply for agricultural uses. Specifically, there are parts of the western county that have no access to surface water; given the groundwater supply problems described above, this could limit the viability of agricultural development. Recognizing this problem, in 1983 the County established the legal

framework (through Zone 29 of County Service Area 28) necessary to provide surface water to this area. Through CSA 28, the County can plan and construct facilities, acquire rights-of-way, easements, and property, contract with water agencies to purchase water, and establish water rights. Because of the difficulties associated with developing transmission facilities, however, the County has so far not been successful in its efforts to supply the area with surface water for irrigation.

While, overall, Placer County has abundant surface and groundwater resources, recent evidence of problems associated with groundwater development suggests that the County needs to actively address the issue of how best to provide water for urban and suburban development and agricultural irrigation.

Key Questions

While water supply problems in Placer County have not yet become critical, there are some important questions that the County should consider in formulating an approach to avoiding future problems.

- Are current and projected groundwater quality and overdraft problems in Placer County severe enough to justify stopping further reliance on groundwater, except by agricultural users? Is there enough information to determine the severity of the problems?
- If groundwater problems are determined to be severe enough, should new development be required to identify a reliable surface water source prior to construction?
- Should groundwater be reserved solely as an emergency supply and/or for supplemental use during periods of peak demand?
- Should County water development regulations differ for different geographic areas of the county or for different uses of water?
- Is it appropriate to continue relying on groundwater, particularly for agricultural irrigation, in areas exhibiting quality and overdraft problems? Should the County become more actively involved in efforts to provide irrigation water to the western county?
- Are the groundwater quality and overdraft problems evident in the western part of the county severe enough to justify creation of a multi-jurisdictional groundwater management program?

General Plan Options

The questions posed above assume that continued reliance on groundwater will eventually lead to the kind of problems currently evident in the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan Area. The County's responses to these questions depend primarily on the perceived immediacy or urgency of the potential water supply problems. The options described below relate largely to how the County intends to use the new General Plan as a vehicle for dealing with water supply issues.

Option 1: Continue to Rely on both Surface Water and Groundwater: Currently, the County will approve development as long as project proponents are able to demonstrate adequate water availability, be it surface or groundwater, except in the Dry Creek-West Placer Community Plan Area, where surface water is required for residential developments exceeding 1 unit per 10 acres in density. Option 1 would continue this practice, making an implicit judgement that existing problems are not severe enough to compel changes in basic County policy. The major concern with this approach is that, because it is so

narrowly focused, it ignores questions of the cumulative effects of groundwater development, both in terms of overdrafting and contamination. Currently, the County has no systematic way of determining the cumulative effects of individual developments. At a minimum, this argues for the County to develop a system for evaluating cumulative effects. This could range from the County simply facilitating the analysis by acting as a "clearinghouse" for water information to the County preparing and operating a water resource model for use in considering requests to develop local resources. The County could do this unilaterally, but it would make sense to collaborate with the Placer County Water Agency, since PCWA is the water purveyor for the area of the county most likely to need additional water and with the most significant existing problems.

Option 2: Rely on Large Surface Water Suppliers but Allow Interim Groundwater Use: This option would require that where there is evidence of groundwater quality or supply problems, existing large and reliable water systems would be expanded to supply water for all new development within their service areas or "spheres." This option presumes that there is currently sufficient evidence to conclude that serious overdrafting and contamination problems are. This option further presumes that large systems that are able to conduct comprehensive planning programs and take advantage of economies of scale are the best suppliers of surface water. Planning for future reliance on these large systems would require that logical service areas for the systems be clearly defined for both their existing service capacities and their potential expanded capacities. For development outside of existing service areas, groundwater could be used as an interim supply pending system expansion, provided that appropriate information is available to substantiate the availability of groundwater of suitable quality within the expanded service areas. The County could establish County Service Areas (CSAs) to evaluate groundwater availability and quality in broad areas and to plan for future water development. This regional-level planning would likely require the development of a groundwater quality and quantity model and/or data base. Such a model/data base could be used to identify those areas where surface water would be required and those areas where wells could be used until deemed no longer necessary (due to expansion of large systems).

Option 3: Require New Urban and Suburban Development to Rely on Surface Water: In the interest of protecting its groundwater supplies from overdraft and contamination, the County could require all new urban and suburban development to use surface water only. This option presumes that existing evidence justifies a shift away from reliance on groundwater. This option implies the establishment of some sort of threshold criteria for what constitutes "urban" or "suburban" development. This approach would require new development to acquire surface water rights and secure transmission line rights-of-way, both of which could require substantial time and money. The combination of these delays together with the time normally associated with financing, designing, and constructing projects could postpone projects for several years in areas not currently served by surface water. This approach would, however, help ensure that local source-of-supply surface water rights are protected, since the preservation of such rights is in part based on "use or lose" principles (i.e., an agency with unused rights is susceptible to losing them).

Option 4: Provide Opportunities for Groundwater Users in Problem Areas to Convert to Surface Supply: Under this option, the County would work to provide opportunities for development in areas experiencing groundwater contamination and overdrafting, including agriculture, to convert to surface supplies. Because the costs associated with this approach could be very high, the County might establish a program to ease the financial burden on groundwater users that shift to surface supplies. This could include requiring new development to oversize surface water distribution systems to accommodate existing development. It could also include direct County involvement in identifying and acquiring sufficient surface water rights, as well as in helping to fund necessary transmission facilities and treatment plants. Because it focuses on existing rather than new development, this option could be combined with any of the other four options.

Option 5: Promote Development of Surface Water Supplies for Agricultural Irrigation: Under this option, the County would adopt policies and institute programs to provide surface irrigation water, particularly in the western part of the county where there is evidence of groundwater overdrafting. Since the principal problem with providing irrigation water to this area is the lack of adequate surface water transmission facilities, the County's involvement would focus on the development of such facilities, either in conjunction with local water suppliers or alone. While the initial development of these facilities would be very costly, the expense could offset long-term problems and costs associated with continued groundwater use.

WASTEWATER MANAGEMENT

Issue Summary

Two basic approaches to collecting and treating wastewater are currently being used in Placer County. The first is the community system, which consists of a network of collection lines that connect individual wastewater generators to a centralized treatment facility; this type of system predominates in Placer County. The second approach is on-site collection and treatment using septic systems. On-site systems are used predominantly in Placer County's rural, outlying areas that cannot be efficiently served by community wastewater systems.

Placer County's community wastewater systems range in size from systems that serve smaller unincorporated communities (e.g., Sierra Lakes) to large systems that serve the county's cities and the unincorporated fringe areas around the cities. For the most part, the small community facilities have limited capacity for growth. Systems serving the larger urban centers generally have sufficient capacity to serve some additional growth, but would need to be expanded to accommodate significantly more development.

The community treatment systems in Placer County primarily use two methods to dispose of treated wastewater effluent: land discharge (e.g., irrigation, evaporation, and percolation) and discharge to surface watercourses (i.e., rivers and streams). Over 60 percent of the treated effluent currently generated by community systems in Placer County relies on surface water discharge for final disposal. Recent regulatory trends suggest that limitations may be placed on new treatment facilities proposing surface discharge. Accordingly, reclamation and reuse of treated effluent (e.g., as irrigation water) is likely to become the preferred disposal methodology. Reclamation, however, requires a higher degree of treatment and is more expensive on a per-unit basis than land or surface water discharge.

While community systems in the county have generally operated without significant problems, there is mounting evidence that the use of on-site systems in some areas of Placer County has detrimental impacts on groundwater quality, specifically nitrate contamination of local aquifers. This is particularly true in some areas in the western part of the county that have elevated groundwater and poor soil percolation, and in many foothill and mountain areas of the central and eastern county that have elevated groundwater, poor or thin soils, and steep slopes.

The regulation of both community and on-site wastewater is focused on compliance with waste disposal regulations aimed at protecting water resources from contamination and on preventing the associated public health problems. These regulations are administered and enforced by multiple layers of federal, state, and local agencies. At the federal level, the Clean Water Act prescribes policies related to protection of water quality. This act is implemented by the United States Environmental Protection Agency (USEPA), which has granted administrative authority in California to the State Water Resources Control Board

(SWRCB). The SWRCB, in turn, delegates routine implementation to the nine Regional Water Quality Control Boards (RWQCB), including the Sacramento Valley and the Lahontan Region Boards, which cover the west and east slopes of Placer County, respectively. These regional boards are responsible for adopting basin plans that include policies and programs for regulating both on-site and community wastewater disposal.

The county's community wastewater systems are under the direct purview of the RWQCBs with jurisdiction in Placer County, which oversee the development and operation of these systems. Most on-site wastewater systems are regulated by County ordinance, which is enforced by the Environmental Health Division of the County Department of Health Services. Regional Board Basin Plan Guidelines direct that the County oversee the development and operation of community systems with residential discharges less than 1,500 gallons per day. Proposals for larger discharges and discharges of higher strength commercial and all industrial wastes must be reviewed by the Regional Board for determination of applicable pretreatment and discharge standards.

Key Questions

Given the institutional framework for regulation of both community and on-site wastewater systems and the problems associated with on-site systems, there are several questions that the County should consider.

- Are the problems associated with on-site treatment systems severe enough to justify adopting policies to further limit their use? Is there enough information to determine the severity of the problems?
- If the County determines that on-site system development should be further limited, what additional limitations are appropriate?
- Since development in Placer County, both within and outside of cities, is eventually expected to exceed current community wastewater system capacities, what is the best approach to addressing future treatment needs? Expansion of existing systems? Development of a regional system?
- How can the County incorporate reclamation and reuse principles into planning for future wastewater treatment systems and improvement of existing systems?

General Plan Options

The questions posed above suggest that the County needs to focus on how it will regulate both community and on-site wastewater systems as development pressure increases. The following policy options present different approaches to guiding the development of future systems and addressing the problems of existing systems. It is important to note that these options are not mutually exclusive.

Option 1: Continue Ad Hoc Approval of New On-site Systems: This option would continue the current practice of allowing the development of on-site wastewater treatment systems on a case-by-case basis. This approach could further stipulate that future proposals for on-site systems carefully assess potential cumulative groundwater impacts.

Option 2: Limit On-site System Use to Larger Parcel Sizes: To ensure protection of groundwater resources in Placer County, this option would limit the use of on-site systems to larger parcels (e.g., ten acres or larger as in the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan area) and would prohibit on-site systems areas where soil and groundwater conditions are not suitable. Where soils and groundwater conditions

and project scale or density prohibit the use of on-site systems, alternative community systems (e.g., septic tank effluent pumping systems, variable grade sewers, vacuum sewers) should be considered. If these alternative systems prove infeasible, the County would require the development of community wastewater systems.

Option 3: Establish a Reclamation Policy for Community Wastewater Systems: This option would promote reclamation and reuse by establishing a policy requiring new development relying on community wastewater systems to incorporate reclamation and reuse technology. In addition to requiring new development to reclaim and reuse wastewater, such a policy could encourage existing community wastewater treatment systems to modify their facilities as economic conditions permit and as demand for reclaimed water increases.

Option 4: Promote Regionalization of Community Wastewater Systems: This option would foster the development of regional wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal facilities where economically and technically feasible. Regional facilities could be managed either by cities or county service areas, depending on the circumstances. Regionalization, especially where urban and suburban development is occurring rapidly, may be the most cost-effective solution for wastewater management.

1.6 FISCAL AND FINANCIAL ISSUES

PUBLIC FACILITY AND SERVICE FINANCING

Issue Summary

The County has become increasingly concerned about funding of public facilities, particularly those facilities that are needed to serve new growth. In the past, the County has not required new development, either within cities or in the unincorporated areas, to address its impacts on County facilities such as jails, courts, libraries, regional transportation systems, and general County administrative office space. As a result, many of these facilities have become congested as staffing has increased.

In 1990, the County began reviewing proposed development projects to assess their potential impacts on all types of County infrastructure. The County proposed to the Placer County Local Agency Formation Commission (LAFCO) that this review process be applied to all future annexations and unincorporated area development. The County has also begun a comprehensive analysis of capital facilities needed to accommodate growth through the year 2010. The analysis will document the full cost of new facilities and will propose methods of funding the cost with revenues from new development.

The findings of the County's capital facilities analysis and investigation of possible funding methods will have important implications for the policies and programs of the new General Plan. Because the General Plan will more definitively identify the amount, type, and location of development that the County anticipates over the next 20 years, the County will have an opportunity to better assess the associated facility needs. In addition, the new plan will provide an opportunity for the County to coordinate policy efforts regarding alternatives for funding the needed facilities.

Key Questions

New policies that address how the County will fund countywide facilities must resolve several important questions.

- Beyond those services mandated by state law (e.g., jail capacity, health facilities), what kind of countywide services does the County want to provide its residents and workers?
- How should the costs for providing facilities be allocated between existing population and new development, between residential and non-residential land uses, and between incorporated and unincorporated areas?
- What types of financing mechanisms should the County use for countywide facilities (e.g., Mello-Roos bonds, certificates of participation, developer exactions and fees)?

General Plan Options

While the new General Plan's approach to countywide facility funding will be largely informed by other studies that are currently under way, there are some broad options that merit consideration at this point.

Option 1: Use Existing Sources to Expand Countywide Facilities: Although discretionary revenues are a small percentage of the total, the County could use these discretionary revenues to increase the capacity of existing countywide facilities. This option would realize only small gains in capital investment and could result in lower operating standards.

Option 2: Raise Existing or Institute New Taxes to Expand Countywide Facilities: The County could raise existing or institute new taxes (e.g., utility tax, special assessment districts, a half-cent sales tax) to generate additional revenue to fund capital facilities. Future cuts in State financial assistance to counties could, however, make such tax increases necessary just to support ongoing operation and maintenance expenditures, thereby limiting their availability to fund facility development. Although past attempts at increasing the sales tax in Placer County have failed to obtain the necessary two-thirds vote, future votes could be necessary.

Option 3: Charge New Development for its Share of Countywide Facilities: Some California counties have begun charging *all* new development in the county for the cost of additional countywide facilities needed to serve the new development. This approach would require that Placer County's cities adopt the County's program and apply it to all new development within their jurisdictions; such agreements might be difficult to negotiate, but may be tied to other issues of concern to the cities (i.e., growth in incorporated versus unincorporated areas). In addition, a fair allocation of future facility costs could result in large financial burdens that would inhibit job-creating development.

UNINCORPORATED SERVICE LEVELS AND FUNDING

Issue Summary

During the past few decades, growth in the unincorporated areas of Placer County has increased the size of existing suburban communities and created new developments in previously rural areas. The County has provided the residents and workers of these unincorporated areas with services similar to those typically provided by cities. These municipal-type services—primarily sheriff's patrol, local parks, libraries, and general government services—have been funded primarily by discretionary general fund revenues. Counties, including Placer County, are not generally as well-suited as cities to provide these types of services, partly because of the dispersed pattern of population and employment and partly because of the County's responsibility for funding state-mandated facilities and services. The County's dual role as the administrator of state-mandated services and as provider of municipal-like services to the

unincorporated areas get particularly complicated during the annual budget process. Each year, the County Board of Supervisors must allocate scarce discretionary revenues between countywide service obligations (including provision of services to incorporated areas) and services to unincorporated areas. Because the cost of many countywide services is determined by the State Legislature through program requirements, and the Legislature has increased mandated levels of service without increasing financial assistance, the percentage of the County's budget dedicated to these services has increased. Conversely, the percentage of discretionary revenue available to fund municipal-like services to the unincorporated areas has decreased.

Key Questions

If the County intends to continue attracting new development to its unincorporated areas, its obligations to provide municipal-like services will continue to increase. This situation raises several important questions.

- Should the County commit to a minimum service level for each of the municipal-like services it provides to unincorporated areas?
- Given the County's relative disadvantages in providing municipal-like services, should the County continue to attract new development to existing unincorporated communities, or should it allow for the development of new unincorporated communities?
- Should the County formally distinguish among different unincorporated areas of the county in setting service standards? For instance, should it establish level of service standards for remote rural areas that differ from those for urban and suburban areas?
- If new development requires higher levels of municipal-like services, should those additional costs be funded entirely by new development?

General Plan Options

The questions posed above focus on what kind of services the County intends to provide to residents and businesses in the unincorporated area and how it will fund these services. The following options present broad choices for addressing these questions.

Option 1: Require All New Urban Development to Annex to Cities: This option would limit further increases in the County's responsibility to expand current or provide new municipal-like services. This would require that each city, instead of the County, assume responsibility for providing municipal-like services to new development. Under this option, the County could concentrate on providing those countywide services for which it is statutorily-responsible.

Option 2: Restrict New Unincorporated Development to Existing Unincorporated Communities: This option would allow the County to take advantage of existing service and facility capacity to serve new growth. Marginal additional capacity can be added more efficiently than providing new facilities to serve previously-undeveloped areas.

Option 3: Establish Differential Level of Service Standards: This approach would call for the County to establish a series of level of service standards that recognize appropriate differences in the type of development generating the demand for services. For instance, the County could set different service level

standards for urban and rural development. Some counties explicitly recognize that it is infeasible to provide the same level of services to remote rural areas as to urban and suburban areas without incurring much higher costs.

Option 4: Require New Development to Pay the Full Cost of Providing Municipal-Like Services: This option would stipulate that all new municipal-like services be funded entirely by new development, regardless of the level of service called for by County standards. This would involve establishing funding mechanisms to ensure that any new service costs be adequately covered. For example, the County could institute County Services Areas (CSAs) to provide higher service levels (e.g., a higher ratio of deputies per 1,000 population).

CHAPTER 2

*DESCRIPTION OF
LAND USE ALTERNATIVES*

CHAPTER 2

DESCRIPTION OF LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

2.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes three conceptual land use alternatives for the pattern of future development in Placer County: (1) new growth directed to cities; (2) expansion of established unincorporated communities; and (3) new growth area. The descriptions of the three alternatives are presented in three sections: the first summarizes the essential features or characteristics of each land use alternative; the second summarizes and compares the buildout holding capacities of the three alternatives; and the third describes the type and amount of development assumed under each alternative by the year 2010. These sections set the framework for the comparative analyses of the land use alternatives contained in Chapter 3.

To facilitate the analysis and comparison of the three land use alternatives, County Staff and Consultants developed a two-tiered geographic reference system. Based roughly on the County's current community plan area boundaries and the areas covered by the general plans of the cities within the county, 28 "planning areas" were defined for tabulation of baseline information. These planning areas, which include the incorporated cities (and a new town assumed under Alternative 3), have also been aggregated into six "regional analysis areas" to facilitate a more general assessment of the potential impacts of the alternatives. Table 2-1 outlines the relationships between the six regional analysis areas and the 21 planning areas and 7 cities or towns that they include. Figure 2-1 shows the boundaries of the regional analysis areas.

TABLE 2-1

GEOGRAPHIC ANALYSIS AREAS

Regional Analysis Areas	Planning Areas	Cities/Towns
Tahoe Basin	Tahoe Basin (TRPA Jurisdiction)	
Sierra Resorts	Alpine Meadows Squaw Valley Martis Valley	
Sierra	Placer East Summit Gold Run/Dutch Flat/Alta	
Lower Sierra	Colfax Community Plan Area Foresthill Meadow Vista Weimar/Applegate/Clipper Gap	City of Colfax
Auburn-Foothills	Auburn-Bowman Horseshoe Bar/Penryn Newcastle/Ophir	City of Auburn Town of Loomis
South Placer	Dry Creek Granite Bay Lincoln Community Plan Area Placer Central Placer West Sheridan Sunset	City of Lincoln City of Rocklin City of Roseville New Town (unincorporated)

The discussions of buildout holding capacity and 2010 development assumptions later in this chapter and the comparative analyses in Chapter 3 refer to primarily to the regional analysis areas, although some discussions refer to the planning areas. In some cases, primarily because the issue does not lend itself to the sort of precision implied by the breakdown, even larger geographic areas are used for purposes of analysis. For instance, the analyses of fiscal and financial issues in Section 3.6 of Chapter 3 refer to only three geographic areas: South County, Mid-County, and Tahoe/Sierra.

2.2 CHARACTERISTICS OF THE LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

Each of the three land use alternatives is described below according to the following set of distinguishing characteristics:

- Form of New Development
- Location of New Development
- Land Use Mix
- Standards and Conditions
- Changes to the Current General Plan

The following pages describe these characteristics in detail for each of the alternatives, and Table 2-2 (page 2-9) summarizes this information. Tables 2-3 and 2-4 show how the differences among the alternatives would affect buildout holding capacity, while Tables 2-5, 2-6, and 2-7 summarize 2010 development estimates for each alternative.

ALTERNATIVE 1: NEW URBAN GROWTH DIRECTED TO CITIES

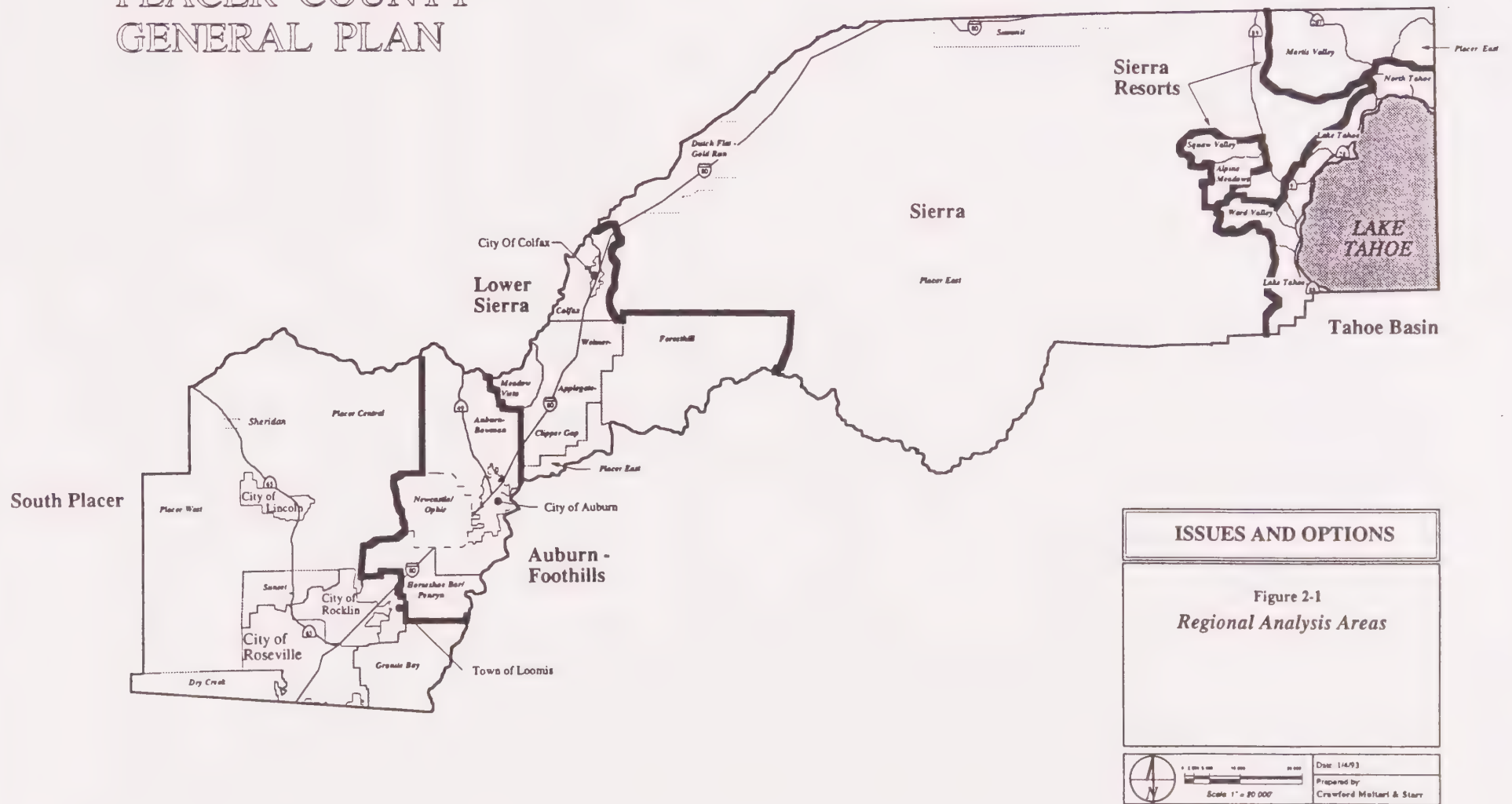
This alternative emphasizes shifting jurisdictional control over new growth and development from the County to the cities within the county. Accordingly, County General Plan policies would be modified to encourage most new urban-scale growth to occur within the incorporated cities of Placer County (including currently unincorporated areas within city spheres of influence to be annexed to cities), rather than in unincorporated areas of the county. This would in part be accomplished by the following measures:

- Limiting the growth potential implied by the current *County General Plan*, *Agricultural Element*, and community plans. No new growth areas would be identified.
- Reducing current development potential in select unincorporated areas. Such reductions would occur where existing plan designations reflect an unrealistic level of development given the capacities of area resources, infrastructure, and/or services. In addition, unincorporated area development capacity would be reduced where necessary to support redirection of growth to the cities.

Form of New Development

Most new development under Alternative 1 would take place within the cities. The forms of unincorporated area development allowed under this alternative would include infill development within existing community plan areas, dispersed residential, agricultural, open space, and resource-based recreational uses.

PLACER COUNTY GENERAL PLAN



Location of New Development

New unincorporated area growth would be limited to currently-designated communities, with reductions in the extent and density of growth contemplated by the existing *General Plan* for select areas. New proposals for urban growth that would require general plan amendments or rezoning would not be considered. County *General Plan* and zoning designations within city spheres of influence would be changed to limit development prior to annexation, so that most urban development would be approved by cities. This would also help ensure that city plans for the spheres are not be compromised by potentially incompatible development in the interim.

Land Use Mix

New development in the unincorporated areas would be limited to: rural residential; scattered convenience commercial (small centers of one to five acres); agriculture; and resource-based recreation. New industrial development outside of the cities would be confined to areas currently designated for such development. Areas of protected open space would be expanded.

Standards and Conditions

1. Revenue sharing agreements would be negotiated with the cities.
2. Protection of natural resources would be emphasized in the approval of new developments.
3. Compatibility of new development with agricultural uses would be emphasized.

Changes to Current Plan

This alternative would result in the following specific changes to the present County *General Plan* and community plans:

1. **Agricultural Land and Timberlands.** All viable agricultural land would be identified and appropriately designated. Land in the 100-year floodplain along major creeks in the western portion of the county would be designated for open space uses. Permitted development densities in timberlands would be reduced.
2. **Auburn/Bowman.** Overall development potential would be reduced as described in the *Draft Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*, or further, depending on negotiations with the City of Auburn.
3. **Dry Creek/West Placer.** The area of the community plan currently designated as "Planning Reserve Area" would be eliminated, thereby reducing the buildout potential of the Dry Creek/West Placer plan by approximately 800 housing units. Permitted density west of Roseville to Watt Avenue would be limited to 10-acre parcels (i.e., the parcel size estimated as necessary to accommodate on-site septic systems in this area). Commercial land would be limited to a small area of neighborhood commercial.
4. **Colfax/Weimar.** Overall development potential would be substantially reduced because the current plan unrealistically anticipates growth in areas of steep slopes and poor on-site sewage disposal system performance. Land for which development potential is significantly constrained (e.g., the American River Canyon and areas exceeding 30 percent slope) would be identified and

appropriately designated. In the Weimar area, there would be no expansion of commercially-designated areas where no public sewer and water service is available.

5. **East Placer.** Timberlands currently designated with minimum parcel sizes of 10 and 20 acres would be changed to 40-acre minimum. Viable timberland areas designated for 80-acre minimums would be changed to a 160-acre minimum. The development potential indicated by the current *County General Plan* would be reduced in the Cold Stream Valley area.
6. **Foresthill.** Development potential would be reduced slightly to assist in redirecting most growth to the cities. No expansion of the downtown commercial area would be allowed unless public sewer and water service is available. Land for which development potential is significantly constrained (e.g., the American River Canyon and areas exceeding 30 percent slope) would be identified and appropriately designated.
7. **Lincoln.** Unincorporated areas within the current sphere would be designated to prohibit urban development prior to annexation.
8. **Martis Valley.** Development potential would be reduced to assist in redirecting most growth to the City of Truckee.
9. **Sheridan.** Because of existing water and sewer constraints, overall development potential would be reduced to accommodate no more than natural increases of existing population or redevelopment of currently-developed areas.
10. **Tahoe Basin.** Overall development potential would be reduced in the North Tahoe, Tahoe City, Ward Valley, and Lake Tahoe community plans to reflect development limitations adopted by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA).

ALTERNATIVE 2: EXPANSION OF ESTABLISHED COMMUNITIES

Under this land use alternative, the County would promote new growth in established unincorporated communities within and immediately adjacent to existing developed areas and away from environmentally-sensitive areas. The County would achieve this objective by promoting development in areas that can now accommodate, or could be expanded to accommodate, additional growth without exacerbating existing or causing new natural resource, infrastructure, or public facilities and services problems. Under this alternative, the County would, nonetheless, modify existing plans to reduce development potential in unincorporated areas where land use designations reflect unrealistic development potential in light of resource, infrastructure, or service limitations. This alternative would provide for no new communities or other major new growth areas; it instead would call for the intensification of existing unincorporated areas, including areas within the spheres of influence of cities. The most important distinction between Alternatives 1 and 2 is that under Alternative 1, the approval of new urban development would be left up to cities, while under Alternative 2, the County would continue to approve such development.

Form of New Development

New development in the unincorporated communities targeted for growth would emphasize urban densities with compact urban form, implement "neo-traditional" pedestrian- and transit-oriented urban planning concepts where feasible, and de-emphasize typical suburban development. New development would be sited and designed to help establish distinct community character. Commercial development would

emphasize "village commercial" character that would have the appearance of a small community, pedestrian-scale downtown rather than an automobile-oriented shopping mall typical of modern suburban development.

Location of New Development

Where appropriate, new urban-type development would be located near transportation/transit corridors, and where public facilities and services can be efficiently provided. Some urban growth would be allowed in the unincorporated areas within city spheres of influence, subject to the standards described below.

Land Use Mix

Although a full range of residential uses would be allowed, the plan would emphasize the "ends" of the range (e.g., dispersed rural homesites on very large parcels and higher-density urban residential). In addition, land would be designated for various other uses, including the following: convenience and village commercial; mixed use developments; agriculture; resource-based recreation; large-scale industrial development in the Sunset Industrial Area; small industrial centers within various unincorporated urban areas; and additional protected open space.

Standards and Conditions

1. Expansion of unincorporated communities would be linked to the provision and maintenance of adequate levels of infrastructure and public facilities and services.
2. Development within city spheres of influence prior to annexation would be generally discouraged. Where past County practice has allowed development within city spheres (e.g., North Auburn and the Sunset area within the Roseville and Rocklin spheres of influence), new development would be required to comply with special standards to ensure compatibility with city policies.
3. Protection of natural resources would be emphasized in the approval of new developments.
4. Compatibility of proposed uses with adjacent agricultural uses would be emphasized.

Changes to Current Plan

This alternative would result in the following specific changes to the present County *General Plan* and community plans:

1. **Agricultural Land and Timberlands.** All viable agricultural land would be identified and appropriately designated. Land in the 100-year floodplain along major creeks in the western portion of the county would be designated for open space uses. Permitted development densities in timberlands would be reduced.
2. **Auburn/Bowman.** Overall development potential would be reduced consistent with the *Draft Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*.
3. **Colfax/Weimar.** Overall development potential would be substantially reduced because the current plan unrealistically anticipates growth in areas of steep slopes and poor on-site sewage disposal system performance. Land for which development potential is significantly constrained

(e.g., the American River Canyon and areas exceeding 30 percent slope) would be identified and appropriately designated. In the Weimar area, there would be no expansion of commercially-designated areas where public sewer and water services are not available.

4. **Foresthill.** The amount of land designated for higher density development, both residential and commercial, near the downtown would be increased. Land for which development potential is significantly constrained (e.g., American River Canyon and areas exceeding 30 percent slope) would be identified and appropriately designated.
5. **Gold Run/Dutch Flat/Alta/Baxter.** Overall development potential would be slightly increased to support upgrading community infrastructure.
6. **Horseshoe Bar/Penryn.** The Penryn Parkway area would be planned for compact urban development.
7. **Sheridan.** The community plan would be changed to accommodate a population of up to 10,000 and the range of land uses necessary to provide a complete, self-sustaining community. This would require the improvement of existing infrastructure and services. Planning for future development would emphasize mixed-use design concepts to help create a town center and a distinct community identity.
8. **Tahoe Basin.** Overall development potential would be reduced in the North Tahoe, Tahoe City, Ward Valley, and Lake Tahoe community plans to reflect development limitations adopted by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA).

ALTERNATIVE 3: NEW GROWTH AREA

Under this alternative, the County would identify an area or areas suitable for the establishment of new urban development. This alternative would redirect growth from the established unincorporated communities, thereby relieving development pressure on potentially sensitive areas. Development in new growth areas would emphasize "neo-traditional" planning principles (i.e., compact pedestrian- and transit-oriented development). Under this alternative, the County would modify existing plans to reduce development potential in unincorporated areas where land use designations reflect unrealistic development potential in light of resource, infrastructure, or service limitations. In conjunction with the identification of new growth areas, the County would explore a transfer of development rights (TDR) program as a means of reallocating development potential from existing communities and surrounding agricultural land to the new community site. While under Alternative 1 the County would direct new urban development to the cities, and under Alternative 2 it would continue to approve new urban development in some of the same areas as the cities (e.g., within city spheres of influence), under Alternative 3 the County would provide an opportunity for urban development in an entirely new location.

Form of New Development

For purposes of analysis, this report assumes that new urban development would be designed to function as a discrete "new town" with a buildout population of approximately 20,000 and an area of about four square miles. Community design would emphasize urban densities with compact urban form, implement neo-traditional urban planning concepts where feasible, and de-emphasize typical suburban development. Commercial development would emphasize "village commercial" character.

Location of New Development

County Staff and Consultants identified several site selection criteria for the location of any new urban development areas. These criteria are as follows:

1. Near a feasible regional transportation corridor with access to one or more major arterials.
2. South and west of Auburn.
3. Located so as to minimize impacts on agricultural lands.
4. Located so as to minimize adverse impacts on unincorporated communities.
5. Located so as to avoid significant groundwater recharge areas.
6. One mile or more from existing or planned development within an existing city (so that a community separator/ buffer/wildlife corridor is maintained).
7. Near employment centers, but at least one mile from existing industrial areas.
8. At least two miles from the Western Regional Landfill.

For purposes of this analysis, County Staff and Consultants have determined that the general area that best satisfies these criteria is near Baseline Road, just west of Roseville.

Land Use Mix

The new development area envisioned under Alternative 3 would include the full range of urban land uses necessary for a self-sufficient community. The growth potential in some of the existing unincorporated areas would be reduced by as much as 50 percent. The County would work toward significant expansion of protected open space areas, particularly between the new development area and nearby development.

Standards and Conditions

The new urban development area would be located and designed so as to achieve as many of the following objectives as possible:

1. Provide for significant buffers from existing urban areas to separate the existing and new developed areas into identifiable and sustainable communities with distinct identities.
2. Provide the full range of land uses necessary to support a full range of public services, including transit services.
3. Maintain compatibility with any adjacent agricultural uses.
4. Permanently preserve and enhance any sensitive open space areas, significant natural areas, and habitat corridors within development project site boundaries, and maintain compatibility with such features on adjacent lands.

5. Provide a variety of housing types, emphasizing affordability for all income groups.
6. Designate land in a manner that would promote balance, both qualitative and quantitative, between residential and non-residential development (i.e., jobs-housing balance).
7. Provide an adequate water supply and other necessary services.
8. Assist in the resolution of regional problems, including but not limited to air quality, transportation, regional employment needs, and growth pressures on existing communities concerned about rapid growth.
9. Minimize adverse economic effects on existing urban centers and agriculture.
10. Protect and enhance existing industrial areas.

These objectives are based on the *Performance Policies* that the Placer County Board of Supervisors adopted in March 1992. Appendix A to this report contains a brief discussion of these policies along with a complete list of them (see Table A-3 in Appendix A).

Changes to Current Plan

This alternative would result in the following specific changes to the present County *General Plan* and community plans.

1. **Agricultural Land and Timberlands.** All viable agricultural land would be identified and appropriately designated. Land in the 100-year floodplain along major creeks in the western portion of the county would be designated for open space uses. Permitted development densities in timberlands would be reduced.
2. **Auburn/Bowman.** Overall development potential would be reduced slightly consistent with the *Draft Auburn/Bowman Community Plan*.
3. **Colfax/Weimar.** Overall development potential would be substantially reduced because the current plan unrealistically anticipates growth in areas of steep slopes and poor on-site sewage disposal system performance. Land for which development potential is significantly constrained (e.g., the American River Canyon and areas exceeding 30 percent slope) would be identified and appropriately designated. In the Weimar area, there would be no expansion of commercially-designated areas where public sewer and water services are not available.
4. **Dry Creek/West Placer.** The capacity of areas designated Planning Reserve would not change, but would be reconfigured to encourage more mixed-use and higher-density development. Buffers around existing development would be expanded.
5. **Gold Run/Dutch Flat/Alta/Baxter.** Overall development potential would be increased slightly to support upgrading community infrastructure.
6. **Foresthill.** The amount of land designated for higher-density development, both residential and commercial, near the downtown would be increased. Land for which development potential is

significantly constrained (e.g., the American River Canyon and areas exceeding 30 percent slope) would be identified and appropriately designated.

7. **Placer East.** A location for a new ski resort facility would be identified.
8. **Placer West.** The new growth area would be located in Placer West, near Baseline Road, west of Roseville, but outside of the Dry Creek watershed.
9. **Sheridan.** The existing community plan's holding capacity would be maintained, but planning for future development would emphasize mixed-use design concepts to help create a town center and a distinct community identity.
10. **Tahoe Basin.** Overall development potential would be reduced in the North Tahoe, Tahoe City, Ward Valley, and Lake Tahoe community plans to reflect development limitations adopted by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA).

TABLE 2-2

SUMMARY OF LAND USE ALTERNATIVE CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
	New Urban Growth Directed to Cities	Expansion of Established Communities	New Growth Area
Form of New Unincorporated Area Development	Infill existing communities; dispersed residential, ag, open space, resource-based uses.	Urban densities with compact form, village commercial, more defined community character.	New town of approximately 20,000 people and about 4 square miles in area.
Location of New Development	Current locations, reduced extent. City spheres of influence become holding zones for eventual city development.	Urban densities near transit corridors, and where facilities/ services can be provided. Some growth in city spheres of influence.	Based on site selection criteria.
Land Use Mix	Agriculture, rural residential, more open space, resource-based recreation, scattered convenience commercial. No industrial other than Sunset.	Residential uses, convenience and village commercial, mixed use, open space, ag, resource-based recreation, Sunset industrial and small industrial centers in urban areas.	Full range of urban land uses necessary for self-sufficiency.
Standards and Conditions	Revenue sharing agreement. Compatibility with agriculture. Natural resource protection.	Special conditions for development within spheres. Compatibility with agriculture.	Compatibility with agriculture, jobs-housing balance.

2.3 BUILDOUT HOLDING CAPACITY OF THE LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

Table 2-3 (page 2-11) shows estimates of the maximum amount of unincorporated area development that would be permitted under each of the three land use alternatives, expressed in terms of the total number of housing units and the acreage of commercial and industrial development. This maximum development potential is referred to as the "buildout holding capacity," because it reflects the amount of development under each alternative that the land use designations would accommodate or "hold" if all of the land were developed or "built-out." Table 2-3 also shows the estimated amount of existing development and the buildout holding capacity of the existing community plans, based on existing zoning.

Most of the holding capacities in Table 2-3 were derived from analysis of existing zoning classifications using a computerized geographic information system (GIS). Other sources of the information include the *Draft Auburn/Bowman Community Plan* and the *Agricultural Element*. The capacities shown in Table 2-3 represent the maximum number of housing units and amount of commercial and industrial acreage that could be accommodated at buildout of the three land use alternatives. The actual level of development at buildout, however, will almost certainly not reach the theoretical maximum of 100 percent of holding capacity, but is more likely to reach only 80 percent of capacity, based on historic experience in Placer County. Table 2-4 aggregates the planning area information from Table 2-3 into the regional analysis areas.

For comparative purposes, Figure 2-2 illustrates the differences between existing residential development and the housing unit holding capacities of the three land use alternatives for the unincorporated area of the county. Figure 2-3 illustrates the differences between existing commercial and industrial development and the unincorporated area holding capacities of commercial and industrial land under the three land use alternatives.

TABLE 2-3

**UNINCORPORATED AREA BUILDOUT HOLDING CAPACITY OF LAND USE ALTERNATIVES
by Planning Area**

Planning Area	Existing Development			Existing Zoning			Alternative 1			Alternative 2			Alternative 3		
	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres
Tahoe Basin	11,450	96	0	35,875	1,090	0	12,750	120	0	12,750	120	0	12,750	120	0
Alpine Meadows	475	4	0	1,450	30	0	1,450	30	0	1,450	30	0	1,450	30	0
Squaw Valley	1,000	10	0	4,075	140	0	4,075	140	0	4,075	140	0	4,075	140	0
Martis Valley	900	10	1	9,825	45	65	8,075	35	65	9,825	35	65	9,825	35	65
Placer East	825	6	3	9,400	65	80	7,925	65	80	7,925	65	80	7,925	65	80
Summit	650	1	0	3,425	25	0	3,425	25	0	3,425	25	0	3,425	25	0
Gold Run/Dutch Flat	575	8	0	1,775	65	0	1,750	65	0	1,750	65	0	1,750	65	0
Colfax Community Plan Area	1,050	1	1	7,275	40	20	3,525	40	20	3,525	40	20	3,525	40	20
Foresthill	2,000	11	29	6,725	90	305	6,525	90	305	6,525	90	305	6,525	90	305
Meadow Vista	1,525	10	1	2,900	45	80	2,875	45	80	2,875	45	80	2,875	45	80
Weimar/Applegate	1,900	6	1	6,250	145	5	5,600	145	5	5,600	145	5	5,600	145	5
Auburn/Bowman	7,325	225	106	15,575	745	575	15,575	745	575	15,575	745	575	15,575	745	575
Horseshoe/Penryn	2,650	9	1	5,925	130	20	5,925	130	20	5,925	130	20	5,925	130	20
Newcastle/Ophir	1,575	15	35	3,425	140	280	3,425	140	280	3,425	140	280	3,425	140	280
Dry Creek	475	9	26	6,375	85	340	2,550	10	290	6,375	85	290	5,875	85	340
Granite Bay	5,275	65	6	11,150	205	0	11,150	205	0	11,150	205	0	11,150	205	0
Lincoln Community Plan Area	75	1	4	825	5	1,660	275	5	460	300	5	460	300	5	460
Placer Central	2,050	1	3	3,950	5	90	2,675	5	90	3,825	5	90	3,825	5	90
Placer West	500	1	3	1,275	0	75	1,125	0	75	1,150	0	75	1,125	0	75
Sheridan	225	1	1	1,350	10	45	250	10	45	3,500	25	150	1,350	10	45
Sunset	25	0	283	250	0	1,665	150	0	1,665	250	0	1,665	250	0	1,665
New Town	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	8,400	55	360
Total	42,525	490	504	139,075	3,105	5,305	101,075	2,050	4,055	111,200	2,140	4,160	116,925	2,180	4,465

Sources: *Placer County General Plan*
Placer County Zoning Ordinance
 Crawford Multari & Starr
 Recht Hausrath & Associates

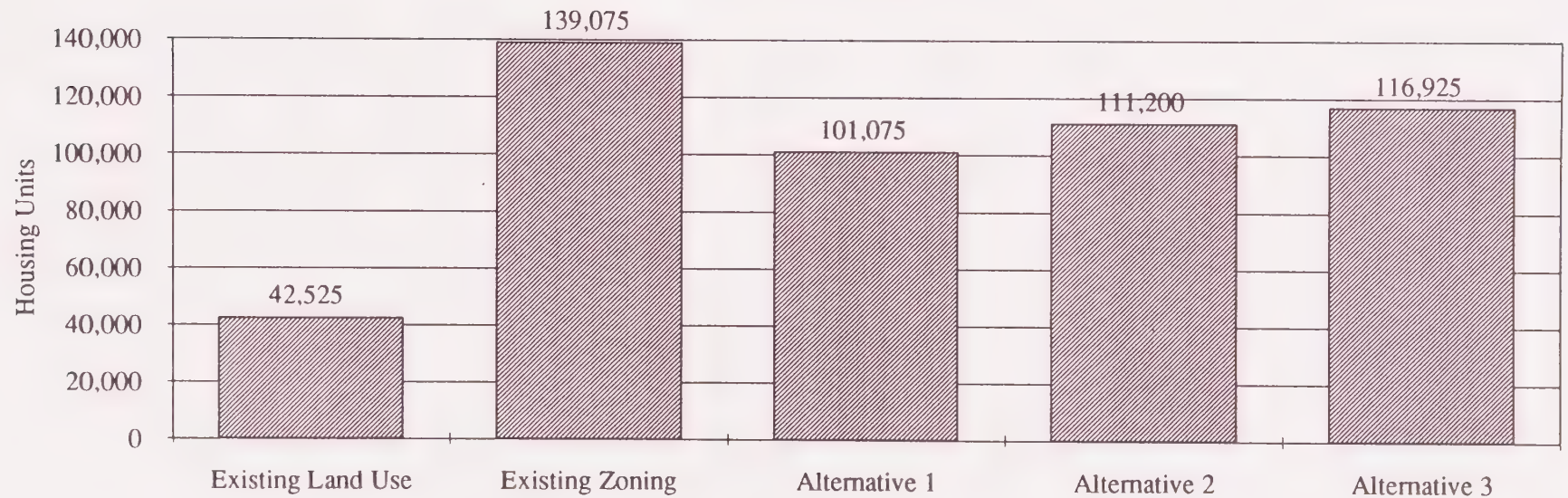
TABLE 2-4
UNINCORPORATED AREA BUILDOUT HOLDING CAPACITY OF LAND USE ALTERNATIVES
by Regional Analysis Area

	Existing Development			Existing Zoning			Alternative 1			Alternative 2			Alternative 3		
Regional Analysis Area	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres	Housing Units	Comm. Acres	Ind. Acres
Tahoe Basin	11,450	96	0	35,875	1,090	0	12,750	120	0	12,750	120	0	12,750	120	0
Sierra Resorts	2,375	24	1	15,350	215	65	13,600	205	65	15,350	205	65	15,350	205	65
Sierra	2,050	15	36	14,600	155	80	13,100	155	80	13,100	155	80	13,100	155	80
Lower Sierra	6,475	28	32	23,150	320	410	18,525	320	410	18,525	320	410	18,525	320	410
Auburn-Foothills	11,550	249	142	24,925	1,015	875	24,925	1,015	875	24,925	1,015	875	24,925	1,015	875
South Placer	8,625	78	326	25,175	310	3,875	18,175	235	2,625	26,550	325	2,730	32,275	365	3,035
Total	42,525	490	504	139,075	3,105	5,305	101,075	2,050	4,055	111,200	2,140	4,160	116,925	2,180	4,465

Sources: *Placer County General Plan*
Placer County Zoning Ordinance
Crawford Multari & Starr
Recht Hausrath & Associates

FIGURE 2-2

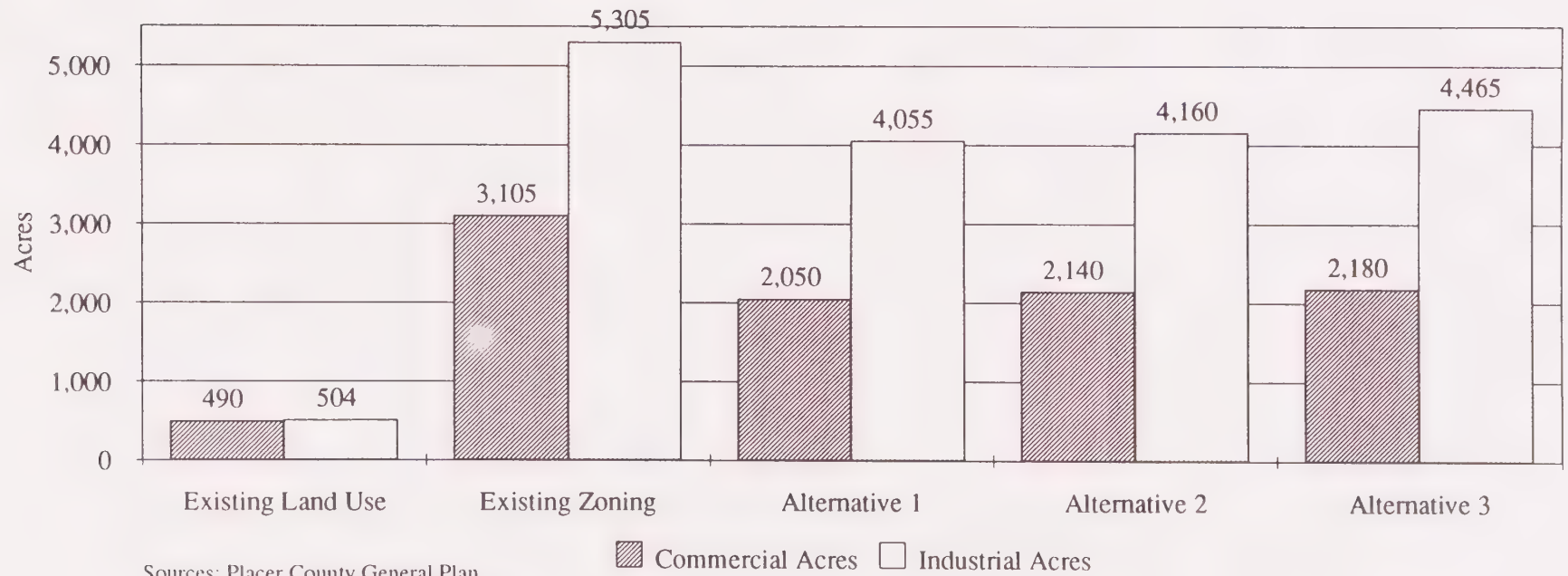
HOUSING UNIT BUILDOUT HOLDING CAPACITY
Total Unincorporated Area



Sources: Placer County General Plan
Placer County Zoning Ordinance
Crawford Multari & Starr
Recht Hausrath & Associates

FIGURE 2-3

COMMERCIAL/INDUSTRIAL HOLDING CAPACITY
Total Unincorporated Area



Sources: Placer County General Plan
Placer County Zoning Ordinance
Crawford Multari & Starr
Recht Hausrath & Associates

2.4 2010 DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS FOR LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

Section 2.3 described the buildout holding capacities for the land use alternatives in terms of dwelling units and commercial and industrial acreage. These holding capacities represent the *total* development potential based on the assumptions described in Section 2.1. Because it is impossible to anticipate how external influences will affect ultimate development, buildout capacity is less useful for comparison of alternatives than development estimates for a fixed point in the future. For purposes of the comparative analyses of the land use alternatives presented in this report (see Chapter 3), County Staff and Consultants have determined that the most appropriate time horizon is the year 2010, an analytical time frame of just under 20 years. This is the time frame typically used in preparing general plans. The 2010 horizon also provides a useful benchmark because it is commonly used in preparing forecasts and projections for future development and market trends.

For the county overall, and in most of the planning areas and regional analysis areas, the total development potential represented by the holding capacity estimates is substantially higher than the amount of development likely to be necessary to accommodate expected population and employment growth through the year 2010. Past decisions to designate land for particular types of development (e.g., residential, commercial, industrial) have typically not attempted to affect the timing of development. The result is that more land has been designated than is necessary given market demand. Such an "oversupply" is sometimes intentionally created to provide latitude for private market decisions to determine the location of development, rather than having local land use regulations constrain or limit market choice.

It should be noted that the year 2010 scenarios presented in this section have been prepared solely for the purpose of comparing the three land use alternatives. The year 2010 should not be interpreted as a precise indicator of when certain events will or should occur; it instead should be viewed as a benchmark year to define an approximate period during which employment and population are expected to grow and to illustrate the levels of development that would accommodate that growth. The development scenarios assume that current experience and trends will continue and that no technological changes or other factors or events will significantly influence the course of the economy, population growth, or behavior and preferences.

It should also be noted that the 2010 development scenarios should not be used to compare these alternatives with development scenarios prepared for other purposes. The specific numbers for any area or city are not in themselves significant; while these numbers are based on an assessment of local land use policies and growth trends, the scenarios could not account for all of the factors that would be appropriate for more specific projections done for community or project-level planning. The scenarios instead focus on the overall growth potential for the county and how that growth might be distributed according to the intent of the three land use alternatives. While this level of detail is adequate for illustrating the likely differences among the three alternatives, projections prepared for other purposes may be more or less precise and may reveal different information.

METHODOLOGY AND ASSUMPTIONS

The 2010 development scenarios for all three land use alternatives assume the same amount of countywide population and employment growth. The scenarios vary only according to locational and jurisdictional allocation of that growth, thereby allowing for more straightforward comparison of the differences among the alternatives.

The starting point for the year 2010 scenarios for the three land use alternatives was an estimation of countywide growth potential, as measured by population and employment. Using other projections as a guide, the Consultants evaluated past growth rates and calculated Placer County's share of regional population and employment totals and growth. The Consultants then made assumptions about how those growth rates and relationships would change over the next 20 years. The Consultants also reviewed several other projections, including population projections for the region and Placer County prepared by the State of California Department of Finance (DOF) and the Center for the Continuing Study of the California Economy (CCSCE), population and employment projections for the region and the county prepared by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG), and population and employment projections prepared by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency (TRPA). In addition, the Consultants evaluated recent projections used in the Placer County *Congestion Management Plan* (CMP) and *Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) efforts.

The Consultants estimated the labor force associated with population projections in the county using a "labor force participation rate" for the year 2010 that reflects a continued, yet slower, increase in participation. In other words, the percentage of the population that is employed would continue to grow, but not as fast as it has in the past several years. The Consultants then converted the estimate of the countywide labor force to an estimate of employed residents, assuming an average five percent unemployment rate. This estimate was then compared with the projection of total jobs in Placer County; this comparison was repeated several times until the relationship between the county's employed residents and jobs in the county appeared reasonable, considering continued intra-regional commuting throughout the Sacramento metropolitan area.

The basic growth parameters for Placer County to the year 2010 are as follows:

	Population	Employment
2010 Total	300,000	123,000
Change	+129,548 from 1990	+57,200 from 1991
Annual Growth Rate (Compounded)	+2.87% from 1990	+3.35% from 1991

The population scenario above falls within the range of other recent projections (SACOG, DOF, CCSCE, and projections used for 1992 Placer County CMP/RTP), and the employment scenario is consistent with the employment growth rates and with the share of regional employment growth captured by Placer County implicit in SACOG projections.

The projections for Placer County assume continued strong growth over the long-term. All sources consulted agree that the Sacramento region will be one of the fastest growing areas of California and that Placer County will capture an increasing share of the regional growth. Accordingly, Placer County's population and employment growth rates for 1990 through 2010 are higher than elsewhere in the region, and Placer County captures a larger share of regional growth than in the past. These growth rates and the amount of regional growth captured by Placer County are, nonetheless, lower than those experienced in the 1980s.

The projections reflect long-term patterns of change (growth or decline) and are not sensitive to short-term construction or business cycles. Long-term projections assume that recession and expansion cycles and construction booms and busts continue to occur and that, over time, cyclical ups and downs average out to a long-term trend.

To allocate assumed 2010 population and employment growth among the planning areas according to the land use alternatives, the Consultants first analyzed long-term regional and countywide economic and demographic trends and relationships and then assessed the development potential in the various parts of the county. This analysis also considered market factors influencing the type of development likely to occur in the county. Based on this analysis, the Consultants distributed the assumed 2010 development among the planning areas and cities, and then aggregated these estimates by regional analysis area. The result is a set of year 2010 development scenarios for the alternatives expressed in terms of population and employment as well as estimates of commercial, office, and industrial building space and single-family and multi-family dwelling units.

The three land use alternatives differ most with respect to development levels and patterns in South Placer County. This area is expected to accommodate the greatest amount of future development in the county as it becomes increasingly integrated into the Sacramento Metropolitan Area. Even with the relatively strong long-term growth rates assumed for this analysis, the southern part of the county has a vast supply of land, considering development potential in the cities and the unincorporated areas. The three land use alternatives reflect the Consultants' judgements about how differences in County development policies would affect the future allocation of growth, assuming no constraints on the supply of land available for development. For each planning area, these judgements are based on review of existing development patterns and on the intent of policies for future development, as well as consideration of factors such as accessibility and the nature of activity in nearby areas.

The 2010 development scenarios assume that development in the various South Placer County locations is largely substitutable. That is, new residents or employers moving into the southern part of the county would not necessarily favor one location over any other in selecting where to locate. For example, households that would choose to locate in Lincoln, Rocklin, or Roseville under Alternative 1 would instead locate in the South Placer new town under Alternative 3 or in other South Placer community plan areas under Alternative 2. Similarly, businesses that would choose the Sunset Industrial Park under Alternative 2 would instead locate in the new town under Alternative 3 and would locate in business parks in South Placer cities under Alternative 1.

DESCRIPTION OF 2010 DEVELOPMENT SCENARIOS

Tables 2-5 through 2-8 present the 2010 development scenarios developed for comparison of the three land use alternatives. Tables 2-5 and 2-6 show how the household population and employment growth is distributed among the unincorporated areas and cities under each alternative. Tables 2-7 and 2-8 translate these population and employment estimates into estimates of the residential development (i.e., housing units) and non-residential development (i.e., commercial, office, and industrial building square footage) needed to accommodate growth through the year 2010.

Alternative 1: New Urban Growth Directed to Cities

Alternative 1 reflects a long-term pattern most similar to development trends of the 1980s. High rates of growth for both population and employment would be maintained in the cities, and existing urban boundaries would be expanded to accommodate that growth.

Alternative 2: Expansion of Established Unincorporated Communities

The scenario for Alternative 2 reflects a growth pattern most similar to the longer-term past trend, considering the entire 20-year period from 1970 to 1990. Growth rates would remain high in the cities, but unincorporated areas would capture a higher share of the growth than they do in Alternative 1. The Alternative 2 development scenario assumes the Sunset Industrial Area would be successful in capturing a significant share of the commercial and industrial development that would occur in Lincoln, Rocklin, and Roseville under Alternative 1.

Alternative 3: New Growth Area

Similar to the scenario for Alternative 2, the 2010 development scenario for Alternative 3 shows more population and employment growth in the unincorporated areas and less population and employment growth in South Placer County cities than does Alternative 1. The new town assumed under this alternative results in a shift of growth from those cities and also of some growth from other planning areas in South Placer County. Alternative 3 would result in more growth in the unincorporated areas than would Alternative 2, since more of the development that would otherwise occur in Lincoln, Rocklin, and Roseville under Alternative 1 would be captured by the new town. Because the pace of non-residential development tends to lag behind residential development, the short-term shift would be more dramatic for population than for employment. In the longer term (i.e., beyond 2010), the new town could be expected to result in more dramatic shifts of the employment growth otherwise expected to occur in South Placer cities.

County Staff and Consultants assume that the new town planning process would take several years to complete. Development of the new town would, therefore, not begin until sometime in the late 1990s, with the first housing units available for occupancy around the year 2000. Because of the scale of the new town and the amount of time necessary for the planning and development process, new town housing and commercial and industrial space are not assumed to be built-out by 2010. The population scenario for the new town reflects about 85 percent of the estimated buildout population of 20,000 residents (i.e., approximately 17,000 residents in 2010). Commercial and industrial development in the new town is expected to lag behind residential development, so the employment scenario for 2010 reflects about 75 percent of estimated build-out employment of 11,000 jobs (i.e., approximately 8,250 jobs in 2010). For these reasons and based on other projections, an even larger new town proposal would not have resulted in greater growth estimates through the year 2010.

TABLE 2-5
2010 HOUSEHOLD POPULATION SCENARIOS FOR LAND USE ALTERNATIVES
by Regional Analysis Area

REGIONAL ANALYSIS AREA	EXISTING CONDITIONS		ALTERNATIVE 1		ALTERNATIVE 2		ALTERNATIVE 3	
	1990 Population ¹	Percent of Total	2010 Population	Percent of Total	2010 Population	Percent of Total	2010 Population	Percent of Total
Tahoe Basin ²	9,257	5%	12,000	4%	12,000	4%	12,000	4%
Sierra Resorts	4,442	3%	4,750	2%	5,450	2%	5,450	2%
Sierra	3,883	2%	4,250	1%	4,250	1%	4,250	1%
Lower Sierra	15,523	9%	20,907	7%	20,907	7%	20,907	7%
Auburn-Foothills	28,515	17%	36,370	12%	41,870	14%	41,619	14%
South Placer	21,319	13%	26,723	9%	36,080	12%	32,478	11%
New Town ³	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	NA	16,853	6%
Total Unincorporated	82,939	49%	105,000	35%	120,557	40%	133,557	44%
Total Cities	87,513	51%	195,000	65%	179,443	60%	166,443	56%
TOTAL COUNTY	170,452	100%	300,000	100%	300,000	100%	300,000	100%

Note: These scenarios have been prepared as background information for analyses for the Placer County General Plan Update. The primary purpose is to provide a means of to compare the land use alternatives being considered in the *Issues and Options Report*.

¹For the Placer County cities, the 1990 household population estimate is from the 1990 Census. The estimates for the community plan areas were derived from the County Assessor's data base summaries of dwelling units by Community Plan Area and vacancy rate and persons-per-household factors from the 1990 Census.

²The Tahoe Basin scenario is based on projections prepared by the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. The scenario is the same for all alternatives.

³Under Alternative 3, a new growth area would be located in the South Placer area. For analytical purposes, the new town is shown separately on this table.

Source: Recht Hausrath & Associates.

TABLE 2-6

2010 EMPLOYMENT SCENARIOS FOR LAND USE ALTERNATIVES by Regional Analysis Area

[illegible]

2010 HOUSING UNIT ESTIMATES FOR LAND USE ALTERNATIVES by Regional Analysis Area

[illegible]

TABLE 2-8

2010 ESTIMATES OF BUILDING SPACE FOR LAND USE ALTERNATIVES
(Thousands of gross square feet)

[illegible]

CHAPTER 3

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

CHAPTER 3

COMPARATIVE ANALYSIS OF LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

3.1 INTRODUCTION

This chapter assesses and compares the implications of the three land use alternatives described in Chapter 2. The alternatives are assessed according to several factors, which are grouped under the following topical headings:

- Urban Form and Jobs-Housing Balance
- Natural Resources
- Transportation and Circulation
- Infrastructure
- Economic and Fiscal Issues

The assessment of the three land use alternatives presented in this chapter relies heavily on the 2010 development scenarios described in Chapter 2. As the 2010 scenarios in Tables 2-6 and 2-7 show, the quantitative differences among the alternatives in terms of jobs and housing units in any given regional analysis area are very small. In fact, in many cases there are no differences among the alternatives and in most the differences are negligible. These quantitative similarities, however, obscure three facts. First, while the total numbers for each regional analysis area may be similar, if the numbers were disaggregated by planning area and city limits, they would likely reveal greater distinctions. Second, the potential development numbers for the three alternatives do not fully reflect the qualitative distinctions among the alternatives. As the descriptions in Chapter 2 indicate, each land use alternative is based upon a different set of policy assumptions that represents broad philosophical distinctions among the alternatives. Third, because it will take many years before new land use policies significantly affect the amount, location, and quality of development, the distinctions are not fully reflected in the 2010 development scenarios. Recognizing these limitations, the comparative analyses in this chapter focus on both the quantitative and the qualitative differences among the three land use alternatives.

3.2 URBAN FORM AND JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE

An important basis for comparing the land use alternatives and evaluating their relative desirability is how they differ in terms of the resulting development pattern and mix of land uses. The pattern of development largely determines how people perceive their environment in terms of the distinctiveness of communities and the contrasts between urban and rural landscapes. The pattern of development also significantly influences how well the urban environment functions in terms of facilitating pedestrian, bicycle, and transit access. The mix of uses as reflected in the relationship between jobs and housing is an important determinant of housing affordability and commuting patterns, as well as quality of life.

URBAN FORM

When the land use element of the general plan designates different geographic areas of the county for different types of development (e.g., agriculture, residential, commercial, industrial, open space), any presently undeveloped areas intended for development can be expected to change over time. Such changes in the use of the land (as when agricultural land is converted to residential or commercial uses) are accompanied by changes in the appearance of the landscape. Because *urban*-type development creates

the greatest changes in appearance, the differences among the alternatives in urban form described in this section focus principally on changes from non-urban uses to urban uses. For the purposes of this report, urban form refers to both the location and density of new development.

Alternative 1: New Urban Growth Directed to Cities

Alternative 1 would direct new growth to the incorporated cities in the county. This alternative would also limit new growth in the unincorporated areas to the unbuilt potential in the current community plans, with some reductions in this development potential, as described in Chapter 2. The forms of unincorporated area development allowed under this alternative would include infill development within the existing community plans, dispersed residential, agricultural, open space, and resource-based recreational uses.

Because responsibility for approving new urban development would shift primarily to the cities under Alternative 1, the County would have little influence over the form of development, at least at the project level. From a larger perspective, the County would affect the pattern of urban development by not approving projects within or immediately adjacent to city spheres of influence. Presumably, this would result in more definite distinctions between urban (i.e., incorporated) and rural (i.e., unincorporated) areas. In conjunction with agreeing not to compete with cities for development within their spheres of influence, the County could work with the cities to develop mutually-agreeable plans for future development within currently unincorporated areas. This planning process could include identification of appropriate methods for establishing buffers between unincorporated areas and incorporated areas; the cities could also work with one another to devise ways to maintain buffers between cities.

Alternative 2: Expansion of Established Communities

Under Alternative 2, the County would actively encourage growth in unincorporated areas, particularly in communities where existing resources, infrastructure, public services, and environmental characteristics could readily accommodate additional development. New urban-scale development would be located near existing or new transportation/transit corridors (e.g., Highways 65 and 80, the Southern Pacific rail line, and future light rail extensions). The relationship between transportation facilities and land use development is discussed in Section 1.3 of this report (see page 1-8).

This alternative anticipates that new urban growth would be compact in form, would be located within and directly adjacent to existing communities, and would de-emphasize traditional suburban development styles in favor of more state-of-the-art planning (e.g., "neo-traditional" urban planning concepts). In addition, some dispersed, lower density rural homesites would be allowed. Because of this additional development, Alternative 2 could result in the greatest change to the county's urban form and the appearance of unincorporated communities and rural landscapes.

Alternative 3: New Growth Area

Alternative 3 would provide for the development of a new town as the primary location for new population and employment growth in unincorporated Placer County. This analysis assumes that the buildout population of such a development would be approximately 20,000, and that the new town would occupy about four square miles. Community design would emphasize urban densities with compact urban form and implement neo-traditional urban planning concepts where feasible, and de-emphasize typical suburban development. Commercial development would emphasize "village commercial" character that

would have the appearance of a small community pedestrian-scale downtown rather than an automobile-oriented shopping mall typical of modern suburban development.

The location of the new community would be based on the site-selection criteria described in Section 2.2 of this report (see page 2-7). Generally, the new community would be located south and west of Auburn, near a regional transportation corridor, at least one mile from any existing city or industrial area, and two miles or more from the Western Regional Landfill. For purposes of this analysis, the general area best matching these criteria is near Baseline Road, west of Roseville.

While Alternative 3 would provide for a significant new growth area, it would call for concurrent reductions in the development potential of other unincorporated areas, and assumes that some new growth now expected in Placer County cities would occur in the new community.

Alternative 3 would significantly alter existing county urban form by providing for an entirely new urban area; it would, however, result in less change to the existing character of unincorporated communities and rural areas (except in the vicinity of the new town) than Alternative 2.

JOBS-HOUSING BALANCE

Section 1.2 of Chapter 1 discussed the jobs-housing balance as a key policy issue for the new County General Plan. As that discussion points out, jobs-housing balance, in its most fundamental form, focuses on the ratio of jobs available in a particular area to the number of employed residents. In a completely balanced community, there would be one job for every employed resident. Such a balance would allow residents the opportunity to work in their community, thereby reducing the need for commuting.

As the discussion in Chapter 1 indicates, the quantitative relationship between jobs and housing is only part of the equation. The other part concerns the relationship between the types of housing and the types of jobs that are available. Ideally, the cost of housing within the community should match the income levels of the jobs available. For instance, if a community's employment base is geared toward lower-income jobs, then the local housing stock should include ample lower-cost units, and vice-versa.

As the buildout holding capacity and 2010 development potential descriptions for the three land use alternatives in Chapter 2 show, the development potential numbers for the regional analysis areas differ so little that the distinctions among the alternatives are obscured. The distinctions, instead, are the result of the land use philosophy and policies underlying each alternative. Alternative 1, for instance, would provide for most future urban development, both residential and employment-generating, to be directed to the cities. Implicitly, this would result in a closer geographic relationship between housing and employment opportunities because development would be less dispersed. In qualitative terms, it is also likely that development occurring within cities would include a broader range of housing types and densities, and thus, a broader range of affordability. This would likely be true of non-residential development also, since the existing base of employment within the cities is relatively broad.

Alternative 2 would promote the expansion of existing unincorporated communities, with an emphasis on "neo-traditional" development concepts (i.e., higher residential density, pedestrian- and transit-oriented design, village-type commercial). Under Alternative 2, the County would promote business park and industrial development in the Sunset Industrial area. Compared with Alternatives 1 and 3, this alternative would result in a more dispersed development pattern. Moreover, while this alternative would encourage a broader range of housing types in the *unincorporated* area than would the other alternatives, it would be less likely to provide as much residential development at densities high enough to support housing

affordable to lower income households. Consequently, Alternative 2 would present more obstacles to the County's attempt to balance jobs and housing in the unincorporated area. It could also result in more commuting within the South Placer area than would either Alternative 1 or 3.

Alternative 3 is designed to promote a jobs-housing balance, at least within the new town that it envisions. Under this alternative, the new town would develop with higher-density residential uses and would be planned to accommodate a full range of employment-generating uses, including development supporting jobs for primary wage earners. Under this alternative, the County would be able to exert some influence over the jobs-housing balance in the new town by monitoring development phasing and attempting to ensure that residential and non-residential development proceed at a relatively even pace. Policies and programs to promote such a balance would be critical to the new town's success in maintaining a jobs-housing balance.

3.3 NATURAL RESOURCES

This section analyzes each of the three land use alternatives in terms of their impacts in three natural resource categories: agricultural land conversion, natural habitat loss, and air quality. For each of these categories, the Consultants identified several "key indicators." Using the information in the *Draft Background Report* and travel model results, the Consultants evaluated and compared the relative effects of the three alternatives on these key indicators.

It should be noted that the relative effects of the three land use alternatives on natural resources in each planning area is highly speculative. The description of overall agricultural land conversion, natural habitat loss, and air quality degradation associated with each alternative is an attempt to describe these combined effects by larger regional analysis areas; it is intended for comparison purposes only and should be considered in conjunction with the information presented in the *Draft Background Report*.

AGRICULTURAL LAND

The evaluation of impacts on agricultural resources is based on the relative extent of important farmland affected by each land use alternative. These effects were given a high, moderate, or low rating by planning area, based on the spatial extent, importance, and potential for conversion of important farmland to urban uses. Important farmland was identified based on information from the State Important Farmland Mapping and Monitoring Program as summarized in the *Draft Background Report*.

Although the Tahoe Basin, Sierra Resorts, Sierra, and Lower Sierra regional analysis areas contain significant amounts of timberland, they contain no land classified as "important farmland." As a result, the following analysis focuses only on the Auburn-Foothills and South Placer regional analysis areas. In addition, the analysis does not address areas within city spheres of influence; the Consultants assume that these areas will ultimately develop, either under the purview of a city or the County. Finally, the County anticipates that it will ensure that the agriculturally-designated land under each alternative will be protected to the extent feasible and agricultural production will be promoted. Section 1.4 (see page ?) describes some the County's choices regarding how it might address agricultural land preservation.

Alternative 1: New Urban Growth Directed to Cities

One of the fundamental objectives of Alternative 1 is the protection of open space and agricultural land. The alternative envisions protecting these land resources by reducing the likelihood that pressure for urban

development will affect these areas. Accordingly, of the three alternatives, Alternative 1 would provide for the highest level of protection of the county's agricultural resources.

Alternative 2: Expansion of Established Communities

Under this alternative, the County would continue to approve urban-type development in its unincorporated communities. The community most affected by this alternative would be Sheridan, which is located in an area relatively well-suited for and currently being used for agriculture. Alternative 2 would also permit continued large-lot rural residential development. Because this type of development would be dispersed throughout the county's rural areas, it is likely that it would occur on or near prime agricultural land. This could result in erosion of the distinction between "agricultural" areas and "rural residential" areas. Because it would allow the most dispersed pattern of urban development, Alternative 2 would be most likely to adversely affect agricultural land and production. Its effects would, however, be less significant than would those of the current plan for the area, because of the promotion of more compact, denser urban development.

Alternative 3: New Growth Area

Alternative 3 would provide for the most unincorporated development of the three alternatives. By definition, however, Alternative 3 would result in a more intensive, concentrated pattern of development by virtue of its promotion of a new town in the western part of the county. The area that appears to be most suitable for the development of a new town (i.e., near Baseline Road, west of Roseville) is classified as "unique farmland/farmland of local importance." Development in this area would, therefore, result in the conversion of important agricultural land to urban uses and could foster additional growth pressures on adjacent agricultural areas. Alternative 3 would, nonetheless, provide for definite boundaries between agricultural and urban uses, and the new town could absorb urban growth that might otherwise encroach on other agricultural areas. As a result, Alternative 3 would have impacts similar to Alternative 2 in terms of the severity of its impact on agricultural land and production.

NATURAL HABITAT LOSS

The evaluation of the impacts of the three land use alternatives on natural habitat is based on the abundance and sensitivity of the existing habitat and the potential disturbance of these habitats within each of the planning areas. The generalized habitat types and locations that were considered are described and mapped in the *Draft Background Report*. The indicator habitat types are as follows:

- Grassland
- Oak Woodland
- Conifer Woodland
- Hardwood Forest
- Chaparral and Shrub
- Riparian
- Wetlands

Potential habitat impacts were rated by planning areas as high, moderate, and low, based on the degree of impact associated with the land use alternatives. These ratings were defined as follows:

High	<p>High potential for the habitat type to be impacted under the land use alternative based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Habitat type is a limited resource in the planning area and is unavoidable (i.e., grasslands) · Habitat type is considered a sensitive resource and may be unavoidable (i.e., oak woodland and wetland communities in grasslands) · Habitat type may be indirectly affected by development (i.e., riparian communities) · Alternative would result in a significant cumulative loss of a limited resource · Alternative would substantially diminish or reduce habitat for wildlife or plant species
Moderate	<p>Moderate potential for the habitat type to be impacted and some potential for avoidance under the land use alternatives based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Habitat type is considered a sensitive resource but would be expected to be avoided during development (i.e., oak woodlands) · Habitat type is known to be present but exact distribution unknown for the planning area. Habitat may be impacted by development.
Low	<p>Low potential for the habitat type to be impacted based on the following criteria:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Habitat type is not considered a sensitive resource and is abundant in the planning area (i.e., conifer forests, hardwood forests, and chaparral) · Habitat type is located in areas where development would not occur · Development would not result in a significant cumulative loss of the resource within Placer County

Migratory deer range or routes were also evaluated using information from the *Draft Background Report* to identify deer range or route location within applicable planning areas, the level of development anticipated in that area under the land use alternatives, and how critical the area is to the deer herds. Critical range that could experience development levels that would adversely affect deer herds were rated "High." Non-critical range or migration routes that could experience development levels that would adversely affect deer herds were rated "Medium." Non-critical range that could experience development levels that are not expected to substantially affect deer herds were rated "Low."

Special-status species and fisheries resources are distributed throughout the county in various locations, patterns, and densities that defy generalization for this analysis. The *Draft Background Report* contains information regarding the types of vegetation and wildlife species that might be affected by the three land use alternatives. In addition, effects on specific sensitive species associated with habitat types such as grasslands, riparian areas, or wetlands were considered in assigning the above ratings for those habitat types.

Based on these criteria, the three land use alternatives were analyzed for their relative impacts on sensitive habitat, as described below. Because the effects in the Tahoe Basin and Sierra regional analysis areas are expected to be the same under all three alternatives, the analysis of habitat loss does not address these areas.

Alternative 1: New Urban Growth Directed to Cities

One of the primary objectives of Alternative 1 is the protection of habitat areas. The alternative envisions protecting these resources by reducing the likelihood that pressure for urban development will affect these areas. Accordingly, of the three alternatives, Alternative 1 would provide for the highest level of protection of the county's natural habitat resources. While this alternative would result in development that might encroach on valuable habitat areas, that development would occur under the jurisdiction of the cities or in unincorporated areas already planned for development. This is particularly the case in the cities of Rocklin, Roseville, and Loomis and in the unincorporated Granite Bay area, where development has a high likelihood of affecting grasslands, oak woodlands, and wetlands

Alternative 2: Expansion of Established Communities

Under this alternative, the County would continue to approve urban-type development in its unincorporated communities. Alternative 2 would also permit continued large-lot rural residential development. Because this type of development would be dispersed throughout the county's rural areas, it is likely that it would occur near valuable natural habitat areas. Because it would allow the most dispersed pattern of future urban development, Alternative 2 would be most likely to adversely affect habitat areas.

Alternative 3: New Growth Area

Alternative 3 would provide for the most unincorporated development of the three alternatives. By definition, however, Alternative 3 would result in a more intensive, concentrated pattern of development by virtue of its promotion of a new town in the western part of the county. The area that appears to be the most suitable for the development of a new town (i.e., near Baseline Road, west of Roseville) includes valuable grasslands and wetland habitats, as well as some oak woodlands. While development in this area would presumably draw some development away from other areas, it could affect some of these important habitat areas. As a result, Alternative 3 would fall between the other two alternatives in terms of its potential impacts on sensitive natural habitat areas.

AIR QUALITY

The evaluation of air quality impacts is based on a calculation of vehicle emissions per day under each land use alternative in each of three regional analysis areas (Lower Sierra, Auburn-Foothills, and South Placer). Since the travel model used to generate input data for the air quality analysis does not cover the Tahoe Basin, Sierra Resorts, and Sierra regional analysis areas, no information on vehicle miles traveled, and thus no air quality information, is available. Traffic and air quality forecasts for these areas will be prepared later in the General Plan Update program. There is not, however, expected to be enough difference among the three land use alternatives in these areas to distinguish them from one another.

The analysis of air quality impacts focuses on three "key indicator" emissions: carbon monoxide (CO); reactive organic gases (ROG); and nitrogen oxides (NOx). The analysis reveals very little difference in air quality effects among the land use alternatives. In most areas of the county, Alternative 1 would result in incrementally lower emissions in 2010 than either Alternative 2 or 3. This is the case simply because development under Alternative 1 would result in the concentration of urban development within cities, thereby promoting more efficient travel patterns than would be likely under Alternatives 2 and 3, both of which would result in increased development in unincorporated areas. The emissions from the alternatives would, however, differ by less than one percent overall. As far as air quality is concerned, therefore, the alternatives would not differ enough to distinguish them meaningfully from one another. The most important decisions regarding air quality concern increased use of transit and the jobs-housing balance, both of which are discussed in Chapter 1.

3.4 TRANSPORTATION AND CIRCULATION

The analysis of future transportation system needs and the impacts of the three land use alternatives is based on a travel demand model developed recently for Placer County. The model translates land use and development information into traffic and public transportation ridership projections. The land use and development inputs to the model are estimates of the amount and location of development (housing units and non-residential building square footage) and descriptions of existing and planned roadway and transit systems. The model covers the entire Sacramento region, including the central and western parts of Placer

County, and is consistent with the regional models used by the Sacramento Area Council of Governments (SACOG) and the Placer County Transportation Commission (PCTC). The model does not cover the area east of Colfax and Foresthill, which would show very little variation anyway, since population and employment projections for the three alternatives are essentially the same for these areas and because traffic is more affected by regional recreational travel demand than by local population and employment. Accordingly, this section summarizes the travel analysis of the land use alternatives only for the Lower Sierra, Auburn-Foothills, and South Placer regional analysis areas.

To assess the implications of the three land use alternatives on Placer County's transportation and circulation system, the Consultants ran the travel demand model using the 2010 development scenarios described in Chapter 2. Using the forecasts from the model, the Consultants analyzed the land use alternatives according to three key measures: (1) trip generation and mode choice; (2) travel patterns; and (3) traffic congestion.

The travel demand model used for this analysis requires a description of both existing and "planned" roadway and transit systems. For purposes of the transportation analysis of the land use alternatives, the Consultants assumed that nearly all of the long-range (20-year) list of improvements in the *1992 Placer County Regional Transportation Plan* (RTP) would be completed by 2010. The analysis, therefore, describes the general levels of traffic congestion and roadway deficiencies that could result from under each land use alternative *with* these improvements. It is very important to note that this list of planned improvements is extensive and that there is no guarantee that sufficient funding will be available to finance all of them. In fact, current funding mechanisms would probably fall far short. Nonetheless, for the purpose of this analysis, all of the transit and roadway improvement projects in the RTP (except the Highway 49 Bypass in the Auburn area) were assumed to be developed under each land use alternative. Since the analysis of the alternatives is intended to reveal the differences among the alternatives, and since the improvements assumed under each alternative are basically the same, the Consultants did not consider the funding uncertainty to be a problem for the purposes of this analysis.

Another complication inherent in using the travel demand model to compare the three land use alternatives is the new town assumed under Alternative 3. As described in Chapter 2, this new town would emphasize urban densities, compact form, village commercial development, and other neo-traditional planning concepts to promote walking and bicycling and discourage automobile travel. To model the effects of Alternative 3, the Consultants had to "describe" the new town to the travel demand model, including its relationship to the regional transit and roadway system. Alternative 3 assumes that the new town would be located generally near Baseline Road and west of Fiddymont Road in West Placer County, where there is currently no major roadway or transit access and where the RTP assumes no major improvements. The Consultants, therefore, had to make some important assumptions about future transportation facilities and demand. Accordingly, the new town was assumed to have direct access to Baseline Road and to Highway 65 via extensions of Blue Oaks Boulevard and/or Pleasant Grove Boulevard. In addition, Baseline Road was assumed to be widened to four lanes east of the new town.

While the new town under Alternative 3 is assumed to develop with sufficiently high density and in a compact-enough form to promote transit development and ridership, it is not located near any of Sacramento Regional Transit's planned light rail lines, and development of a rail line to this area of West Placer County does not appear feasible in the foreseeable future. Consequently, the travel demand model assumes that the new town would be served by several bus lines that would link it with the planned light rail extension to Roseville, as well as nearby communities, but would have no direct rail service.

TRIP GENERATION AND TRAVEL MODE CHOICE

This analysis focuses on two measures of the effect of development on the transportation system: trip generation and travel mode choice. A trip, very simply, is a one-way journey that proceeds from an origin to a destination; it is the smallest unit of movement considered in transportation studies. Each trip has one "production end" (or origin) and one "attraction end" (or destination). Trip generation is the accumulation of trips associated with a particular activity; it is the basis for estimating the level of use for a transportation system and the impact of additional development or transportation facilities on an existing, transportation system. This analysis focuses on "person trips," which are the total trips generated, regardless of the method of travel. The travel demand model used in this analysis estimated the total number of "person trips" anticipated to be "generated" by the development assumed under each of the alternatives. Table 3-2 compares the number of person trips for work and non-work purposes for each alternative as estimated by the model. As the table indicates, total person trips would vary only slightly (one to two percent) among the three alternatives.

TABLE 3-2
TRIP GENERATION COMPARISON
Daily Person Trips

Trip Purpose	Area	Existing	2010 Growth Scenario		
			Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Work Trips	South Placer (New Town)*	167,000	374,000	372,000	374,000 (39,000)
	Auburn-Foothills	72,000	113,000	113,000	113,000
	Lower Sierra	16,000	22,000	22,000	22,000
	Subtotal	255,000	509,000	507,000	509,000
Non-Work Trips	South Placer (New Town)*	752,000	1,654,000	1,620,000	1,611,000 (124,000)
	Auburn-Foothills	374,000	579,000	590,000	590,000
	Lower Sierra	80,000	110,000	109,000	109,000
	Subtotal	1,206,000	2,343,000	2,319,000	2,310,000
Total Trips	South Placer (New Town)*	919,000	2,028,000	1,992,000	1,984,000 (164,000)
	Auburn-Foothills	446,000	692,000	704,000	702,000
	Lower Sierra	96,000	133,000	131,000	131,000
	Subtotal	1,461,000	2,853,000	2,827,000	2,817,000

*Trips associated with the new town area are counted in the South Placer total; they are shown separately to illustrate the new town's contribution to the total trips associated with Alternative 3.

Source: DKS Associates

The second measure used in this analysis is travel mode choice. Mode is simply the method of travel (e.g., automobile, public transportation, bicycle). The trip generation comparison shown in Table 3-2 reflects person travel by single-occupant auto, carpool, and transit, but does not include bicycle or pedestrian trips, since such trips are not included in the trip generation and mode choice equations of the travel model. The Consultants did, however, assume that trip generation under Alternative 3 would be reduced slightly to reflect higher levels of walking and bicycling in the new town.

Table 3-3 compares the estimated percentage choice of travel mode for work and non-work travel. It indicates that, while transit's share of travel within Placer County will remain relatively small and will differ very little among the three land use alternatives, transit ridership will increase dramatically over today's levels under all of the alternatives. The travel model used for this analysis assumes that all of the transit improvements in the 1992 RTP will be implemented by 2010, which would result in a ridership increase from about 2,100 trips per day in 1990 to about 14,200 in 2010. While this represents nearly a seven fold increase, the increase is attributable more to the fact that current ridership is relatively low than to remarkably high ridership in the future.

The regional models used for this analysis assume a number of key relationships between land use activity and trip generation, as well as relationships between the choice of travel mode and economic forces and roadway and transit accessibility. The new town assumed under Alternative 3 reflects neo-traditional planning concepts according to which new development would be designed to promote transit and non-motorized modes of travel. Such developments are also sometimes known as "pedestrian pockets" or "transit-oriented developments" (or TODs). To evaluate the potential benefits of a new town, the Consultants reviewed studies that suggest that neo-traditional development could reduce automobile travel due to several factors:

- **Lower Automobile Ownership:** Studies indicate that older mixed-use neighborhoods that have good transit service, which are the models for neo-traditional planning, tend to have fewer automobiles per household than more recently-developed suburban neighborhoods. Households in these older neighborhoods, however, generally have lower incomes and fewer people than their suburban counterparts. There is, however, little evidence that newer suburban neighborhoods designed according to neo-traditional principles exhibit significantly lower auto ownership than development designed without such principles.
- **Higher Level of Walking and Bicycling:** Neo-traditional planning principles such as concentrated development, convenient neighborhood shopping and services, and a gridded (rather than curvilinear) street system are intended to provide good pedestrian and bike access and, thereby, decrease reliance on automobiles. Increased walking and bicycling will, however, principally affect short distance non-work related travel, which accounts for only a small percentage of total automobile trips.
- **Higher Transit Use:** Higher densities and good transit service will clearly encourage the use of transit. While a new town in West Placer County would presumably have higher densities, extensive transit service is unlikely. For transit service to be effective, it must not only be readily accessible to residents and employees within the new town, but it must also be connected with the multitude of destinations to which the new town residents want to travel. While some bus service to the new town will be financially feasible, extensive service will not.

In analyzing Alternative 3, the Consultants assumed that, given its location and characteristics, the new town would generate 10 percent fewer automobile trips by residents of the new town than would otherwise be predicted by the Placer County travel model. This reduction would be attributed to decreases in both short distance trips (due to higher levels of pedestrian and bike trips) and long distance trips (i.e., those that leave the new town), although reductions in short distance trips would be much more significant than reductions in long distance trips. The overall trip reduction would also result in part from moderately higher levels of carpooling and transit use. The Consultants assumed that trips "attracted" to the new town by non-residents would not be reduced significantly.

The fact that even Alternative 3, with its "transit-friendly" new town assumptions, would be unlikely to justify rail transit extensions, or even significant bus ridership, within the time frame of the new General Plan raises an important point concerning the relationship between land use and transportation, as discussed in Chapter 1 (see page 1-8). While any of the three land use alternatives could be consistent with the first policy option described in that discussion (i.e., low-density, dispersed development relying on automobiles), for all practical purposes, only Alternative 1 would be likely to be consistent with the second option (i.e., high-density, concentrated development relying on transit). Furthermore, most development of the type described under the second option would occur within cities, so the County's support of public transportation and "transit-friendly" development would be focused primarily on the cities, at least within the time frame of the new General Plan (i.e., through 2010).

TABLE 3-3
TRAVEL MODE CHOICE COMPARISON

Trip Purpose	Existing Conditions			2010 Growth Scenario								
				Alternative 1			Alternative 2			Alternative 3		
	Placer South	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras	Placer South	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras	Placer South	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras	Placer South	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras
Home Based Work												
SOV	82.9%	83.1%	82.9%	81.4%	82.3%	77.1%	81.4%	82.2%	77.1%	80.6%	82.1%	76.8%
HOV	16.4%	16.9%	17.1%	16.4%	17.4%	22.9%	16.5%	17.4%	22.9%	16.4%	17.5%	23.1%
Transit	0.7%	0.1%	0.0%	2.2%	0.4%	0.0%	2.1%	0.4%	0.0%	2.2%	0.4%	0.1%
Non-Work												
SOV	52.3%	52.7%	50.5%	52.5%	52.8%	50.1%	52.5%	52.8%	50.1%	51.8%	52.8%	50.1%
HOV	47.5%	47.2%	49.6%	47.1%	47.2%	49.9%	47.2%	47.2%	49.8%	47.5%	47.2%	49.8%
Transit	0.1%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%	0.4%	0.0%	0.0%
All Purposes												
SOV	58.7%	58.6%	57.4%	58.5%	58.4%	55.9%	58.5%	58.4%	55.9%	57.9%	58.3%	55.9%
HOV	41.0%	41.4%	42.6%	40.7%	41.5%	44.0%	40.7%	41.5%	44.0%	40.9%	41.6%	44.1%
Transit	0.2%	0.0%	0.0%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%	0.8%	0.1%	0.0%

HOV= High-Occupancy Vehicle (2 or more occupants)

SOV= Single-Occupancy Vehicle

Source: DKS Associates

TRAVEL PATTERNS

Table 3-4 shows the average trip lengths in miles and minutes (including the effect of traffic congestion) predicted by the travel model for each of the three land use alternatives. As the table indicates, average travel distance will not change significantly from current conditions and would be relatively equal for all three land use alternatives, although Alternatives 2 and 3 would result in slightly greater trip lengths than Alternative 1, which would concentrate development within incorporated areas. Table 3-4 also shows that work trips generated in the new town in Alternative 3 will be shorter on average than trips in the rest of South Placer County due to the assumed employment levels in the new town. Non-work trips generated in the new town would, however, be longer because a significant number of trips would have to leave for services or activities not available in the new town.

TRAFFIC CONGESTION

Placer County adopted its first *Congestion Management Program* (CMP) in 1992. For purposes of the CMP, the County designated a "CMP roadway system" consisting of its principal arterials. These arterials are the major roadways that form the backbone of Placer County's circulation system, carrying an estimated 85 percent of the total vehicle miles travelled (VMT) in the county.

Table 3-5 compares the estimated level of service that would result on the CMP roadway system for the three land use alternatives if the long-range (20-year) list of improvements in the 1992 RTP were implemented. As the table indicates, despite the extensive list of improvements in the RTP, traffic congestion would be greater under all three of the alternatives than it is currently. Table 3-5 also indicates that Alternatives 2 and 3 would have more lane miles of congestion (i.e., level of service F) than Alternative 1.

Because Alternatives 2 and 3 would promote continued development outside of the county's cities, average trip lengths would increase and more traffic demand would be placed on two-lane rural roadways in the unincorporated areas. Since these rural roadways are not included in the 1992 RTP improvement list, the travel model indicates a relatively high level of congestion on them, some of which could be mitigated by adding improvements to the RTP list. Because Alternatives 2 and 3 call for more development that would rely on roadways in unincorporated rural areas, they would require more such improvements than Alternative 1.

TABLE 3-4
COMPARISON OF AVERAGE TRIP LENGTHS

Average Trip Lengths	Existing Conditions			2010 Growth Scenario									
				Alternative 1			Alternative 2			Alternative 3			
	South Placer	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras	South Placer	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras	South Placer	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras	New Town	South Placer	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras
Time in Minutes													
Work Trips	21.3	24.3	34.6	20.4	23.4	34.0	20.6	23.5	34.1	19.6	20.7	24.1	34.7
Non-Work Trips	14.0	14.6	18.4	13.6	14.4	17.6	13.8	14.5	17.6	15.4	14.0	14.7	17.7
All Trips	15.5	16.4	21.9	15.0	16.1	21.2	15.3	16.2	21.2	16.5	15.4	16.5	21.4
Distance in Miles													
Work Trips	12.2	14.3	23.1	12.1	13.5	21.3	12.2	13.6	21.4	10.4	12.2	14.2	22.0
Non-Work Trips	7.0	7.1	8.4	7.0	7.1	8.4	7.1	7.1	8.4	7.4	7.2	7.3	8.5
All Trips	8.1	8.5	11.5	8.0	8.3	11.2	8.2	8.4	11.2	8.2	8.3	8.6	11.4

Source: DKS Associates

TABLE 3-5

**COMPARISON OF LANE-MILES BY LEVEL OF SERVICE
ON PLACER COUNTY'S CMP SYSTEM¹**

Level of Service	2010 Growth Scenario ²											
	Existing			Alternative 1			Alternative 2			Alternative 3		
	South Placer	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras	South Placer	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras	South Placer	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras	South Placer	Auburn-Foothills	Lower Sierras
A-C	262.1	203.6	109.7	305.7	207.4	74.9	292.8	203.4	99.9	287.8	202.0	99.9
D-E	43.2	8.0	0	99.8	69.4	54.2	94.2	69.4	29.2	94.0	70.2	29.2
F	22.2	12.6	0	36.2	0	0	54.2	0.6	0	59.4	1.2	0
Total	327.5	224.2	109.7	441.7	276.8	129.1	441.2	273.4	129.1	441.2	273.4	129.1
¹ Assumes implementation of the 20 year list improvements in the 1992 RTP.												
² Lane miles reflect only those on the designated CMP principal arterial system for Placer County.												

Source: DKS Associates

3.5 INFRASTRUCTURE

This section focuses on the potential impacts of the three land use alternatives on three major aspects of county infrastructure: water systems, wastewater systems, and drainage and flood control systems. To assess these potential impacts, the Consultants estimated future water demands, wastewater generation rates, and potential drainage and flooding conditions based upon the population, employment, and development estimates prepared for each of the three land use alternatives. Using this information and other available background information, the Consultants compared and contrasted the potential impacts on the water, wastewater, and drainage infrastructure. The following paragraphs summarize the findings of this analysis.

WATER SUPPLY AND DELIVERY

There are three primary considerations in the analysis of water service as it relates to the three land use alternatives: supply, treatment, and distribution. To determine the potential effects of the three land use alternatives on local water systems, the Consultants evaluated each of the regional analysis areas based on the existing purveyor-operated treatment and distribution systems, planned or anticipated system improvements, and the amount of 2010 development estimated for each of the land use alternatives. Analysis of individual water purveyors or systems was not deemed necessary for this exercise.

The assessment by regional analysis area reveals that there is very little difference among the alternatives, because anticipated development could largely be accommodated by improvement of existing systems. The one exception is under Alternative 3, which would require the identification of an appropriate raw water source, as well as the development of treatment and distribution facilities. If a surface water source is to be used for supply for the new town, construction of new transmission facilities would be necessary. If the new town is to rely on groundwater resources, studies would be required to determine if the acceptable yield of the aquifer will safely meet the total projected future demand.

WASTEWATER

The Consultants conducted a general evaluation of the regional analysis areas to identify potential impacts to the wastewater infrastructure based on the existing community-operated collection, treatment and disposal systems, planned or anticipated system improvements, and the amount of 2010 development estimated for each of the land use alternatives. Analysis of individual community wastewater systems or on-site systems was not deemed necessary for this exercise.

Alternative 1 would require many existing community wastewater systems to plan and fund improvements to meet additional growth in their service areas. This is especially true for the smaller community systems. Many of the larger city systems, such as Auburn and Roseville, are adequately prepared to meet currently projected growth and have capacity to develop at a faster rate. Lack of capacity in existing collection systems may, however, require rehabilitation of existing sewers and trunk lines.

Alternative 2 would require that existing wastewater systems with surplus capacity accept wastewater flows from the unincorporated areas within their service areas, that new systems be developed, or that new development rely on on-site treatment systems. As with any of the alternatives, availability of sufficient funding to accommodate growth may be a constraining factor. Extension of existing collection systems would be expensive, so growth would most wisely be directed to those areas where service could be provided by existing collection systems with relatively short extensions. Expansion of unincorporated communities would be difficult in areas currently relying on individual on-site systems or small

community wastewater systems with limited remaining capacity. Depending on where development is directed, Alternative 2, could require development of new community wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal systems, or at least significant improvements to existing systems. The cost of providing these system improvements would be high and the process of funding, permitting, and securing approvals from regulatory agencies would be time-consuming.

Alternative 3 would require the construction of a new wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal system for its new town. This could be accomplished in one of two ways. The new town could construct a new collection system to connect to an existing collection system and regional plant, or the developers of a new town could develop an entirely new system, independent of any existing system. The second approach would allow land uses to be carefully planned in relation to the treatment plant. For instance, the land use plan could be drawn to locate commercial and industrial uses around wastewater treatment facilities to buffer residential areas. Siting the highest wastewater producers next to the treatment facilities could also reduce the length, and therefore the cost, of trunk lines. Alternative 3, because it would provide for the development of facilities from scratch, would also allow incorporation of the latest treatment technology and disposal methods. The principal drawback of Alternative 3 would be the high initial costs of a wastewater system for the new town. These costs could be prohibitive.

DRAINAGE

To determine the potential effects of the three land use alternatives on drainage facilities, the Consultants evaluated existing policy, existing structures, and expected or known future changes.

Alternative 1 would ultimately require improvements to the existing drainage and flood control facilities primarily within city expansion areas. Because numerous drainage and flood control studies have been completed for the city areas, the improvements necessary to accommodate incorporated growth are already understood.

The areas expected to absorb additional development under Alternative 2 most likely do not have well-planned, properly-sized storm drainage systems, so extensive infrastructure improvements would likely be required. Since several drainage and flood control studies in the western unincorporated areas of Placer County have been completed recently, planning for drainage and flood control facilities to accommodate future growth under Alternative 2 would not be too complicated. This alternative would require additional facilities to be constructed to accommodate growth in most unincorporated communities.

Because Alternative 3 would provide for development of a new community in an area not currently planned for urban development, it would require additional drainage and flood studies to determine the necessary improvements. The location of the new town would primarily determine the magnitude of potential drainage impacts. Depending on the location, the associated costs of these improvements could be prohibitive since many areas of the county face serious flood and drainage problems. One advantage of this alternative, however, is that resolution of drainage issues could be planned in advance, thereby allowing growth to be directed to areas either without significant problems or to areas where there are relatively simple solutions to drainage problems.

3.6 ECONOMIC AND FISCAL CONSIDERATIONS

FISCAL IMPLICATIONS

This section compares the three land use alternatives in terms of their relative fiscal effects on the County. This analysis is based on Placer County's actual 1990/91 budget. It focuses exclusively on that portion of the budget, in terms of both revenues and expenditures, that will be affected by growth. For example, more than a third of County expenditures relate to health and welfare programs that are funded mainly by state and federal subsidies. To the extent that these programs are supported by state and federal revenues, they are also not affected by growth, assuming funding increases proportionately with increases in the demand for the programs.

Each of the three land use alternatives allows increases in both non-residential and residential development. This fiscal analysis, therefore, must consider the impact of business activity and employment growth, as well as population growth in the county. While workers have some fiscal effect on the County's budget, that impact is substantially different from the impact of a resident. In other words, a person who both lives and works in Placer County has a greater fiscal impact than a person who lives in the county but works elsewhere, and vice versa. In this analysis, workers represent sources of individual sales tax generation as well as indicators of overall business activity. For example, an industrial development generates sales tax both through lunchtime purchases by workers and through any final sales that occur at the development site. Both of these sources of sales tax are unrelated to residential development. They are instead projected to increase with non-residential development, which in most of the fiscal analysis is expressed in terms of employees.

Factors Influencing County Expenditures

The effect of jurisdiction on County service costs is simple to characterize: growth in the unincorporated area is more costly to the County than the same development inside cities. Not surprisingly, the County's service costs also vary depending on the type of development. For instance, residential development requires more public services than most non-residential development. The following paragraphs discuss both types of variation (i.e., by jurisdiction and by development type).

Cost Variation by Jurisdiction

County government really provides two layers of services. The base layer benefits all county residents equally, city residents and unincorporated area residents alike. This layer of services includes social services, the justice system, jails, and some administrative departments, such as the assessor and tax collector. These are services that are not duplicated by cities (e.g., only the County collects property tax.). Although city police departments may maintain temporary holding facilities, the County has responsibility for the courts and permanent jails. According to the 1990/91 actual budget, the County's costs to provide these countywide services was approximately \$200 per county resident.

The second layer of services that the County provides are "municipal-like" services aimed specifically at the population of the unincorporated area. These include sheriff patrols and investigation, parks and recreation, and some administrative services. These services can be distinguished from countywide services by their similarity to the type of government services provided by a city. The 1990/91 budget indicated that the cost of municipal-like services was \$220 per resident in the unincorporated area.

In total, the cost to the County per resident of the unincorporated area, as reflected in the 1990/91 budget, was \$420, the sum of the cost for countywide services plus the additional cost for municipal-like services.

Variation in County Costs by Development Type

This analysis assumes that County costs to provide services to residential development are not affected by the *density* of development, although per capita costs will vary slightly, yet not significantly, depending on the *type* of residential development. On the other hand, County costs are significantly affected by non-residential development in several ways: commercial and industrial development requires permits and inspections during construction; environmental health inspectors certify that workplaces and restaurants are safe; businesses engage in lawsuits in county courts; and the Sheriff receives calls for service from business places as well as homes. In general, however, workers generate fewer costs on a per capita basis than residents. A person employed in Placer County who lives in another county would most likely require public health or welfare services in their home county. Similarly, workers have little or no impact on county parks and museums. An analysis of Sheriff's records of calls for service for a fairly typical week in March 1992 indicates that the majority of sheriff patrol calls are from homes, not businesses. Non-residential land uses, primarily retail, accounted for approximately one-third as many calls for service as did residential land uses. Workers in the unincorporated area generated estimated per capita service costs to the County of \$118, which is 28 percent of the cost of an unincorporated area resident. Inside cities, employees generate per capita service costs to the County of only \$47.

Given the assumptions outlined above and projections of residents and employment by jurisdiction, Alternative 1, which directs the majority of growth to the cities, would generate the lowest service costs to the County. This is because the County only needs to provide countywide services to new city residents and workers, and does not need to expand municipal-like services such as sheriff patrol and general administration. Conversely, Alternative 2 is the most expensive in terms of County costs, because it provides for the largest amount of development in the unincorporated area.

Effect of Jurisdiction on County Revenues

While the two most significant sources of revenue, property tax and sales tax, are highly related to location, revenue generation is generally independent of the expenditure variations described above. Some revenues, but not all, vary by jurisdiction. Employees contribute to some sources of revenues, but not to others. The *Draft Background Report* reviews individual revenue sources and the anticipated effect of growth on revenues. Sales tax and property tax, the revenues with the most relevance to growth, are described below.

Sales Tax

County sales tax receipts are calculated based on the volume of taxable sales that occur in the unincorporated area. The County receives one percent of the sales tax receipts from taxable items sold within the unincorporated area (prescription drugs, food for home use, and some other items are nontaxable). In 1990/91, sales tax receipts represented a relatively small percentage of total revenue; sales tax revenue is, nonetheless, the second largest source of local discretionary revenue, after property tax revenue, making it particularly important to the County.

Estimating sales tax revenue is one of the most complex parts of fiscal analysis. One complicating factor is that sales tax, although it is distributed based on the location of retail activity, in reality results from the interaction between residential and retail development. Both types of development are necessary for

taxable sales to occur. For this reason, for instance, residential development in Auburn can increase sales tax revenue to the County collected in the unincorporated area around Auburn. Conversely, residential development in Sheridan may increase sales tax collections in Lincoln or Roseville.

Currently, the Tahoe and Sierra areas are estimated to account for 35 percent of the County's sales tax revenue, most of which is attributable to spending on tourist and recreational activities. Another 60 percent of total sales tax collected in the unincorporated area is generated in the Auburn/Bowman area, primarily in the Highway 49 corridor. In the mid-county, Auburn/Bowman is the primary destination for many types of shopping; it is the only shopping area in the mid-county that offers clothing, some home furnishings, and repair services, although smaller communities in the mid-county sub-region may have retail outlets that serve basic needs, such as groceries or pharmaceutical supplies.

In the southern part of the county, Roseville and Rocklin contain most of the retail development. While the current population in the unincorporated area in the south county approaches 32,000, almost all of those residents' retail dollars are spent within cities. The construction of a regional mall in either Roseville or Rocklin would solidify either city's competitive position relative to the County.

This analysis uses a relatively simple approach to estimating sales tax revenues. Estimates of sales tax revenue for each land use alternative are estimated by multiplying the square footage of retail development by a region-specific factor for sales tax revenue-per-square-foot of retail space. The revenue-per-square-foot factor for each of three sub-regions of the county (i.e., Tahoe/Sierra, Mid-County, and South County) was developed by relating current sales tax collection to existing retail square footage. For example, dividing total sales tax in the Mid-County by the existing retail square footage there indicates that \$1.92 of sales tax is generated per 1,000 square feet of retail space. In the South County, that factor is higher, at \$2.19 per square foot, which reflects the concentration of auto dealerships in Roseville. Retail outlets in the Tahoe/Sierra area generate significantly more sales tax per square foot (estimated at \$3.36). Table 3-6 shows projected sales tax revenues to the County by land use alternative, assuming the distribution of development between the unincorporated area and the cities described in Section 2.4 of Chapter 2 of this report.

TABLE 3-6

**CHANGE IN COUNTY SALES TAX REVENUES BY GENERAL PLAN ALTERNATIVE
1990 to 2010**

County Sub-region	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
South County	\$ 682,000	\$3,705,000	\$1,971,000
Mid-County	2,892,000	4,622,000	4,622,000
Tahoe/Sierra	2,526,000	2,613,000	2,613,000
Total	\$6,100,000	\$10,940,000	\$9,206,000

Source: *Placer County Actual Budget, 1990/91*; Recht Hausrath & Associates.

Alternative 1, by directing most new development to the cities, limits sales tax to the County. Table 3-6 indicates that sales tax generation in all three sub-regions of the county is lower under Alternative 1.

Alternative 2, which provides for the greatest amount of development in the unincorporated area, is the most beneficial to the County in terms of sales tax. Alternative 3 is closer to Alternative 2 than to Alternative 1. In contrast to Alternative 1, Alternative 3 allows for the same development of retail in Tahoe/Sierra and in Mid-County as Alternative 2.

Property Tax

Property tax represented more than one-fourth of the County's total revenues in 1990/91, and is by far the most important local discretionary revenue. Property tax collection and distribution in California were radically reshaped by Proposition 13, passed by the voters in 1977. That measure continues to have major impacts on property tax collection and the County General Fund. In brief, Proposition 13 required the following:

- Property tax is limited to one percent of a property's assessed value (AV).
- AV increases two percent per year, unless a property changes ownership. In that case, the property is reassessed at market rates.
- The property tax rate cannot be increased, and the County cannot incur debt through a General Obligation Bond, without a two-thirds vote of approval by the electorate.

County property tax revenue is calculated by multiplying assessed value (AV) in an individual tax rate area by the one percent factor to estimate total property tax revenue and then by the County's share of taxes, or tax rate allocation, in that area. The total 1990/91 AV of all residential, non-residential, and vacant property in Placer County was \$11.2 billion. The property tax revenue based on that total AV was distributed between cities and the County. Total property tax revenue in the County in 1990/91 was about \$38 million.

The County's share of property tax differs by tax rate area. For example, a \$200,000 house will pay one percent annually in property taxes, or \$2,000. That \$2,000 is shared between as many as 13 jurisdictions, including the county, cities, school districts, fire protection districts, park districts, cemetery districts, and the county library district. The County's share of the \$2,000 in property tax depends on the house's location. If the house is located in the unincorporated area, the County would generally receive approximately 34 percent of the \$2,000 in property tax, or \$680. If the same house is located inside a city limits, the County would receive from 25 to 28 percent of the property tax, or between \$500 and \$560. (Of course, the County provides only countywide services to city residents, and both countywide and municipal-like services to the unincorporated area.)

Upon annexation or incorporation, the city and the County divide a limited share of the property tax generated in the affected area. The County's share, as well as the share of any districts to be replaced by city departments (e.g. libraries and parks), are redistributed between the city and the County. The shares to schools and other districts not replaced by city departments remain the same. In annexation areas, both the city and the County receive a smaller share of property tax than in areas that were incorporated prior to Proposition 13 or that remain unincorporated. This analysis assumes that the County's share of property tax in annexation areas is 20 percent. One half of growth in cities is assumed to be annexed, and this analysis also assumes that the new town in Alternative 3 will incorporate by 2010.

The type of development, as well as its location (or jurisdiction), affects property tax. Single-family development typically has a higher assessed value (AV), and thereby generates higher property tax

revenues than multi-family development. Property tax generation from non-residential uses depends on the value of commercial or industrial development, which ranges from \$60 to \$100 per square foot on average. Calculated on a per-employee and per-resident basis, non-residential development generates higher property tax revenues than multi-family development, but less than single-family development.

The three land use alternatives would differ very little in terms of their respective total assessed valuation, assuming the same general levels of development in all three through the year 2010. There could be some differences depending on the characteristics of the housing developed under each alternative. A relatively high proportion of multiple-family housing, with lower AV per unit, combined with relatively less of the higher-value housing typical of the much unincorporated area development, would result in somewhat lower assessed value under Alternative 1, compared with the other two alternatives. Housing density and the relative value of residential development in the unincorporated area explains why Alternative 2 would generate the highest increase in assessed value. The higher-density residential development possible under Alternative 3 would mean less total AV than Alternative 2, but more than Alternative 1.

The differences among the alternatives are more pronounced in terms of the property tax revenue that would accrue to the County. With new development concentrated in the cities and substantial amounts occurring in areas that would be annexed to the cities, Alternative 1 would result in the smallest increase in property tax revenue to the County. Alternative 2 would result in the largest increase in property tax revenue to the County, because of the relatively higher value housing and the larger amount of unincorporated development which minimizes annexations to the cities. Assuming the new town incorporates, Alternative 3 would result in property tax revenues that fall in between the other two alternatives.

Overall Comparison of Land Use Alternatives

The comparison of the fiscal benefit of the three land use alternatives involves all of the factors reviewed in this section: the differences in costs between jurisdictions; sales tax by jurisdiction; variation in the County's share of property tax by jurisdiction; and the relative densities of each alternative. Not all factors are of equal weight, and their interaction is important. For example, the County receives less property tax revenue from development inside the cities, but County costs are lower in cities than they are in the unincorporated area. Table 3-7 illustrates this comparison by showing the percentage of County costs funded by sales tax and property tax under each alternative.

TABLE 3-7

COUNTY COST COVERAGE OF SELECTED REVENUES

	Alternative 1	Alternative 2	Alternative 3
Sales Tax	18%	29%	25%
Residential Property Tax	48%	44%	45%

Source: Recht Hausrath & Associates.

As stated earlier, Alternative 1 is at a relative disadvantage compared with Alternative 2 because overall residential density is higher in the cities, and higher density housing development generates lower per capita assessed value. Table 3-7 indicates, however, that even with this handicap, property tax under Alternative 1 exceeds the cost coverage of property tax under the other two alternatives. In other words, given two houses of equal value, one in a city and one in the unincorporated area, the property tax that the County receives on the house located inside the city would go further towards funding the County's costs (only countywide services) than would the same house in the unincorporated area (both countywide and municipal-like services). Although the County receives a larger share of the property tax from the house in the unincorporated area, the cost of municipal-like services exceeds that increment in property tax revenue. While property tax revenue would cover a higher percentage of costs under Alternative 1, sales tax generation would be low. Under Alternative 1, the County would sacrifice potential sales tax receipts by directing most commercial and industrial development to the cities. Improved revenue-sharing agreements with the cities could, however, make the sacrifice less severe. Many counties in California have negotiated agreements for more favorable redistribution of sales tax revenues originating in areas annexed to cities. In addition, more aggressive County efforts to encourage commercial and other business activity to locate in the unincorporated area could result in more sales tax revenue to the County than assumed under Alternative 1. This encouragement would have to extend beyond simply making more land available for commercial development, given the development capacity in the cities and the concentration of the market base in the cities under Alternative 1.

Given the assumptions underlying this fiscal analysis, Alternative 2 would be the most fiscally beneficial to the County for two reasons. First, it would be the most aggressive in terms of the County capturing sales tax because it would result in more commercial development. Second, the housing developed under Alternative 2 would, on average, likely be of lower density and higher value than the housing in either of the other alternatives. This could make up for the fact that the County's share of property tax in the unincorporated area funds a lower percentage of service costs than its share in the cities.

Alternative 3, which combines aspects of the other alternatives, should have a fiscal return that falls in between Alternatives 1 and 2.

PUBLIC FACILITIES AND OTHER INFRASTRUCTURE

Sections 3.4 and 3.5 of this report compare the land use alternatives in terms of roadway networks and other infrastructure needed to accommodate new development through the year 2010. A separate study being prepared concurrently with the General Plan Update, the *Growth Impact Analysis*, will document the need for other public facilities that are the responsibility of County government. Specifically, for all county residents, including residents of the cities, the County must provide and maintain courts and jails, health and welfare facilities, parts of the roadway network, and offices for administrative services. For residents and businesses in unincorporated areas, the County provides an additional level of municipal-like facilities: offices and vehicles for sheriff patrol and investigation services; parks; libraries; and local administrative services, such as planning and building inspection. Fire protection is the responsibility of separate districts. The *Growth Impact Analysis* will estimate the facilities needed to serve expected population and employment growth in Placer County under the new General Plan. In the meantime, this section makes some qualitative comparisons among the alternatives about the demand for infrastructure related to differences in development patterns and the jurisdictions accommodating development in the future. This section also identifies differences among the alternatives in terms of infrastructure finance.

Demand for Facilities

With the same amount of growth expected countywide for all three alternatives through the year 2010, there would be no significant difference in the need for the more centralized countywide public facilities (e.g., courts and jails, health and welfare facilities, and offices for administrative services). Moreover, none of the alternatives proposes a significantly different distribution of development between the Sierra, Foothills, and Valley portions of the county, so none of the land use alternatives would make a difference for decisions about sites for centralized facilities. The differences among the alternatives in terms of the location and jurisdiction of development would, however, create differences in the County's provision of municipal-like facilities and in the distribution networks related to some infrastructure systems.

Alternative 1 proposes that cities accommodate the majority of new development, within current boundaries or through annexation, and provide the requisite municipal facilities (i.e., police and fire stations, parks, local administrative offices, local roads, and utilities). There would be efficiencies to providing facilities for growth adjacent to existing urban infrastructure, and distribution networks and new plant construction for water and wastewater service and for other utilities would be limited under this alternative. Similarly, directing growth to the cities would diminish the County's need to expand the capacity of local roads in unincorporated areas. Compared to the other alternatives, Alternative 1 would minimize the County's role as provider of municipal-like facilities.

Compared to the other alternatives, Alternative 2 would result in greater demand for infrastructure and other public facilities to serve the population in the unincorporated area. This alternative's more dispersed development pattern would not allow for the efficiencies possible with development concentrated around urban existing areas or in a new town. For example, fire stations and branch libraries would have to serve larger areas and sheriff's deputies would have larger beats. These relative inefficiencies, while not always severe or even present in all cases, are generally acknowledged as the consequence of county governments deciding to provide municipal-like services in unincorporated areas. City governments, because they serve more compact urban forms and are not also responsible for regional services (e.g., jails, courts, welfare and health), have historically provided municipal services more efficiently than county governments. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the larger population and employment base in the unincorporated areas under Alternative 2, compared to the other alternatives, might enable the County to reach service level thresholds for providing facilities such as branch libraries or neighborhood parks, resulting in a higher level of service than would otherwise be the case.

The development pattern under Alternative 3 would combine some of the features of both of the other alternatives. Development concentrated in a new town would provide for efficiencies in local distribution networks and roadways. Furthermore, as pointed out in Section 3.5, infrastructure systems in a large-scale, master-planned new town could take advantage of new technologies; this could contribute to reducing the per-capita cost of facilities. Following the same logic, incorporating pedestrian- and transit-oriented features in the new town might reduce the need for the sort of extensive local road networks typical of recent subdivisions accommodating large amounts of development. On the other hand, major arterials and trunk lines for other infrastructure would have to be extended and new capacity created to serve the new town.

Infrastructure Finance

Regardless of which alternative is selected, the County intends to require new development to fund the facilities needed to serve it. This funding requirement, however, does not resolve *how* new development will finance the cost of new facilities.

Most cities in Placer County already have financing mechanisms in place to fund capital expansion and ongoing infrastructure maintenance. These mechanisms include assessment districts, connection and user charges, capital facility impact fees, and ad-hoc subdivision dedications and exactions. The County also has mechanisms in place to fund some local, or municipal-like, infrastructure. The County Public Works Department currently has more than a dozen Traffic Limitation (TL) Zones that collect impact fees for local road, interchange, and transit improvements needed to serve new development. The Public Works Department also imposes fees, charges, and assessments for utilities (e.g., sewer, water, storm drainage). The County Parks Department requires new unincorporated subdivisions to dedicate and improve parks according to the Quimby Act. This act requires all new development within a subdivision to dedicate a minimum of three acres per thousand residents (or pay an in-lieu fee) for neighborhood or community parks. Regional parks are not covered by the Quimby Act.

Despite the funding sources for roads, utilities, and parks described above, the County has not imposed consistent requirements on new development to provide other infrastructure needed to accommodate growth. Types of facilities that are not funded currently include justice facilities (courts and jails), facilities for health and welfare programs, sheriff's patrol vehicles and substations, and general administrative space. In the coming year, the County plans to consider sources such as facility impact fees to fund County facilities needed to accommodate growth. With the cooperation of Placer County cities, those fees could be applied to development in incorporated areas (to cover countywide facilities), as well as to development in unincorporated areas (to cover the additional municipal-like facilities serving those residents and businesses).

Assuming a program to cover County facility costs is in place, the infrastructure finance issues would be essentially the same for Alternatives 1 and 2. Under both alternatives, new development, regardless of jurisdiction, would be expected to pay for its share of countywide facility expansion. Under Alternative 1, the cities would provide more of the municipal facilities and collect more of the funding. Under Alternative 2, the County would provide more of those types of facilities and collect more of the funding.

Development of the new town under Alternative 3 would raise some special concerns about the funding of public facilities. The new town development as a whole would have to achieve some balance between the scope and cost of planned infrastructure and amenities and the debt capacity of the development. For example, in the current depressed climate for financing large-scale real estate development in California, developers have reduced the scale of public facilities when they have not received anticipated levels of financing. Libraries, parks, and fire stations, among other types of infrastructure, have been scaled back. In addition, this analysis assumes the new town would incorporate at some point. Incorporation would require the County to negotiate a property tax sharing agreement and resolve other fiscal issues. Those negotiations could be complicated by large debt service costs assessed for the original financing of municipal infrastructure.

MARKET FEASIBILITY

This section assesses the relationship between the three land use alternatives and real estate market activity and development patterns in Placer County. The discussion describes the market context for future development in Placer County and evaluates the alternatives in light of those market factors. The evaluation considers the amount and pace of growth in the County, the type of development that would be expected, any pre-conditions to achieving development of the character anticipated by the alternatives, and, finally, regional market issues and tourism.

On the demand side, the market for housing in Placer County is predicated largely on the strong economic growth expected in the Sacramento metropolitan area. There is also a significant component of demand from retirees and others attracted by the rural residential quality of life in the county. Placer County, particularly South Placer County, including the cities of Lincoln, Rocklin, and Roseville, is expected to continue to attract a large share of the household growth in the Sacramento region over the next 20 years. In fact, that share is expected to increase over time as other parts of the region become relatively less attractive.

On the supply side, new residential development in Placer County in the past has tended to be developed at the higher end of the quality, and thus price, range of the regional housing market, particularly development in unincorporated areas of the county. Much of that development has been oriented to the "executive home" and "equity-immigrant" sub-markets. The attractions of those types of developments are the large homes on large lots, the high level of perceived community amenities in some developments and, in others, the rural residential atmosphere.

In some unincorporated areas, rural residential development also accommodates some of the demand for lower-priced housing. For some sub-markets, those areas without many amenities and without urban services are more attractive because they result in lower costs.

Placer County cities have accommodated most of the demand for moderately priced housing, particularly multi-family housing. Nevertheless, some of the new residential development in the cities of Roseville and Rocklin has been targeted to the higher-end of the regional housing market. In the future, South Placer County is expected to become increasingly integrated with the metropolitan Sacramento economy, resulting in demand for an increasingly broad range of housing prices and types. Thus, over time the county's housing market is likely to take on more of the characteristics of the overall regional market.

The demand for light industrial, distribution, office, and retail development in Placer County is expected to be relatively strong over the next 20 years. As in the residential market, demand is likely to be strongest in the longer-term as other locations in the region become less attractive and as Placer County locations develop the critical mass to attract a broader range of economic activities.

There is ample capacity in South Placer County, in both the cities and the unincorporated area, to accommodate large facilities or businesses in the manufacturing, distribution, retail, and office sectors. The sites offer proximity to a large labor pool and to desirable residential areas for relocating employees, as well as access to major interstate transportation systems. Placer County has captured a particularly large share of the regional retail market with several large-scale retail outlets recently selecting south county locations. While a growing regional market supports the latter type of development, the local market is irrelevant to many of the other large-scale employers that could locate in the county. For those types of employers, Placer County competes with a range of alternative locations, both elsewhere in the region and outside of California. As a consequence, several key business prospects have selected other business sites instead of Placer County. In spite of this, South Placer County has attracted and retained a relatively diverse group of moderate-to-large-size employers over the last 15 years. Placer County locations could compete more strongly in the future.

While Placer County will continue to compete for large-scale employers, it will also continue to attract smaller manufacturing, distribution, service, and office activities precisely because it is somewhat removed from the center of the Sacramento metropolitan area. This type of business activity, in addition to retail and government and other public service activity, is likely to continue to be the mainstay of economic development in the Auburn area and in some Lower Sierra and Foothills locations.

There are a number of factors supporting diversified economic growth in Placer County in the future. The first is labor force growth. The second is the increasing attractiveness of Placer County locations as business addresses. The third is demand for retail, and commercial and personal services businesses generated by a growing population base. A fourth factor is a strong regional economy combined with a well-developed regional transportation system. Finally, a fifth factor is the availability of land or building space, assuming it is well-served by local infrastructure and services.

All three of the land use alternatives are consistent with the market forces directing development to South Placer County. The most significant differences among the alternatives are in the distribution of development in that part of the county. Much of that difference in distribution is a question of jurisdiction, not location. For both residential and non-residential development, land supply is not a constraint to accommodating expected growth. The primary distinction among the alternatives is the guiding statement about the approach to development policy in unincorporated areas. Viewed from this perspective, development in the Roseville sphere of influence, for example, would be expected to occur under both Alternatives 1 and 2. The difference would be whether that development occurred under the auspices of the City (Alternative 1) or under the auspices of the County (Alternative 2). Under Alternative 3, some of that development would be accommodated in a new town located west of Roseville.

The jurisdictional variation may result in some differences in the pace and type of development. For example, delays or excessive costs to provide infrastructure and other public services might constrain large-scale new development in some areas. This is less likely to be the case for development in city spheres of influence or in the more established South Placer planning areas such as Granite Bay, but it could influence development in Sheridan (Alternative 2) and the West Placer new town (Alternative 3). If those differences were too significant, however, the market would find other solutions, some of which might not be in Placer County (i.e., in El Dorado, Sacramento, or Sutter Counties).

In most other parts of the county, the major changes in development policy from the current General Plan are the same for all of the alternatives and primarily reflect the conclusion that current holding capacities for residential development are not only unrealistic in terms of the market for residential development, but are also not consistent with environmental and infrastructure constraints. Consequently, the reductions in development potential in Colfax/Weimar, East Placer, Foresthill, and Timberland areas would not have a significant effect on the amount of development otherwise expected in those areas. Similarly, policies encouraging infrastructure development in the Gold Run/Dutch Flat/Alta/Baxter areas would not change the market context for future development in those areas and thus would not make a significant difference in the amount of growth expected.

As the market context discussion makes clear, Placer County competes with other counties in the region for both residential and non-residential development. The potential for growth in the region is large, and projections concur that the Sacramento area could support one of the highest growth rates in the state. In addition to conditions such as location, transportation access, and abundant resources, those growth rates to some extent depend on the availability of land to accommodate development. The land supply throughout the region is large. In fact, there are several new town development proposals in the region in addition to the several in Placer County (see Appendix A) that are all counting on capturing significant shares of that growth. It is unlikely that all or even several of those large proposals could be developed as planned over the next twenty to thirty years. It is more likely that one or two will be underway and that the others will either not develop at all or will be reconfigured to adapt to different market conditions. The outlook for large scale development in South Placer County, therefore, depends to some extent on the success of proposals for large-scale development in neighboring counties. If for some reason, new town proposals in Sacramento or Sutter Counties proceeded more rapidly or successfully through the

approval and development process than the Placer County proposals, then development in South Placer County would occur at a slower rate or in a different form than anticipated, particularly in Alternative 3.

The future of tourism and the visitor economy in Placer County is not likely to be affected significantly by the land use alternatives. Tourism is an important part of Placer County's economic base, particularly in the Tahoe Basin and High Sierra areas. Those areas are likely to continue to be attractions to the extent that they remain accessible and, at the same time, maintain, if not improve, the environmental quality that is among the reasons people visit the area. The market base on which these areas draw is expected to grow, so an increasing number of visitors can be expected, assuming the area maintains its ability to compete with other visitor destinations. Growth in South Placer County provides an important source of day and overnight visitors to the Tahoe Basin and to Sierra resorts.

In the Tahoe Basin, all three of the alternatives assume that development potential would be consistent with the development policies of the Tahoe Regional Planning Agency. Alternatives 1 and 2 do not propose significant changes to development policy in the Lake Tahoe and High Sierra areas or in Gold Country communities. Although Alternative 1 proposes some reduction in the development potential of the Placer County portion of the Martis Valley, it would probably not make a major difference in development in the area, considering the large potential that exists elsewhere in Placer County and in neighboring Nevada County. Alternatives 2 and 3 would not change existing development policies in the Martis Valley, which would allow for greater development than Alternative 1.

3.7 SUMMARY COMPARISON OF ALTERNATIVES

The following chart summarizes the findings of the comparative analyses of the land use alternatives in the previous sections of this chapter.

IMPACT CATEGORIES	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3
Land Use, Housing, and Urban Design			
Effects on Urban Form	Because responsibility for approving new urban development would shift primarily to the cities under Alternative 1, the County would have little influence over the form of development, at least at the project level. From a larger perspective, the County would affect the pattern of urban development by not approving projects within or immediately adjacent to city spheres of influence. Presumably, this would result in more definite distinctions between urban (i.e., incorporated) and rural (i.e., unincorporated) areas.	This alternative anticipates that new urban growth would be compact in form, would be located within and directly adjacent to existing communities, and would de-emphasize traditional suburban development styles in favor of more state-of-the-art planning (e.g., "neo-traditional" urban planning concepts). In addition, some dispersed, lower density rural homesites would be allowed. Because of this additional development, Alternative 2 could result in the greatest change to the county's urban form and the appearance of unincorporated communities and rural landscapes.	Alternative 3 would significantly alter existing county urban form by providing for an entirely new urban area; it would, however, result in less change to the existing character of unincorporated communities and rural areas (except in the vicinity of the new town) than Alternative 2.
Jobs-Housing Balance	Alternative 1, for instance, would provide for most future urban development, both residential and employment-generating, to be directed to the cities. Implicitly, this would result in a closer geographic relationship between housing and employment opportunities because development would be less dispersed. In qualitative terms, it is also likely that development occurring within cities would include a broader range of housing types and densities, and thus, a broader range of affordability. This would likely be true of non-residential development also, since the existing base of employment within the cities is relatively broad.	Alternative 2 would promote the expansion of existing unincorporated communities, with an emphasis on "neo-traditional" development concepts (i.e., higher residential density, pedestrian- and transit-oriented design, village-type commercial). Under Alternative 2, the County would promote business park and industrial development in the Sunset Industrial area. Compared with Alternatives 1 and 3, this alternative would result in a more dispersed development pattern. Consequently, Alternative 2 would present more obstacles to the County's attempt to balance jobs and housing in the unincorporated area. It could also result in more commuting within the South Placer area than would either Alternative 1 or 3.	Alternative 3 is designed to promote a jobs-housing balance, at least within the new town that it envisions. Under this alternative, the new town would develop with higher-density residential uses and would be planned to accommodate a full range of employment-generating uses, including development supporting jobs for primary wage earners. Under this alternative, the County would be able to exert some influence over the jobs-housing balance in the new town by monitoring development phasing and attempting to ensure that residential and non-residential development proceed at a relatively even pace. Policies and programs to promote such a balance would be critical to the new town's success in maintaining a jobs-housing balance.

IMPACT CATEGORIES	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3
Natural Resources			
Agricultural Land Conversion	One of the fundamental objectives of Alternative 1 is the protection of open space and agricultural land. The alternative envisions protecting these land resources by reducing the likelihood that pressure for urban development will affect these areas. Accordingly, of the three alternatives, Alternative 1 would provide for the highest level of protection of the county's agricultural resources.	Under this alternative, the County would continue to approve urban-type development in its unincorporated communities. Alternative 2 would also permit continued large-lot rural residential development. Because this type of development would be dispersed throughout the county's rural areas, it is likely that it would occur on or near prime agricultural land. This could result in erosion of the distinction between "agricultural" areas and "rural residential" areas. Because it would allow the most dispersed pattern of urban development, Alternative 2 would be most likely to adversely affect agricultural land and production. Its effects would, however, be less significant than would those of the current plan for the area, because of the promotion of more compact, denser urban development.	Alternative 3 would provide for the most unincorporated development of the three alternatives. By definition, however, Alternative 3 would result in a more intensive, concentrated pattern of development by virtue of its promotion of a new town in the western part of the county. The area that appears to be most suitable for the development of a new town is classified as "unique farmland/farmland of local importance." Development in this area would result in the conversion of important agricultural land to urban uses and could foster additional growth pressures on adjacent agricultural areas. Alternative 3 would, nonetheless, provide for definite boundaries between agricultural and urban uses, and the new town could absorb urban growth that might otherwise encroach on other agricultural areas. As a result, Alternative 3 would have impacts similar to Alternative 2 in terms of the severity of its impact on agricultural land and production.
Natural Habitat Loss	One of the primary objectives of Alternative 1 is the protection of habitat areas. The alternative envisions protecting these resources by reducing the likelihood that pressure for urban development will affect these areas. Accordingly, of the three alternatives, Alternative 1 would provide for the highest level of protection of the county's natural habitat resources.	Under this alternative, the County would continue to approve urban-type development in its unincorporated communities. Alternative 2 would also permit continued large-lot rural residential development. Because this type of development would be dispersed throughout the county's rural areas, it is likely that it would occur near valuable natural habitat areas. Because it would allow the most dispersed pattern of future urban development, Alternative 2 would be most likely to adversely affect habitat areas.	Alternative 3 would provide for the most unincorporated development of the three alternatives. By definition, however, Alternative 3 would result in a more intensive, concentrated pattern of development by virtue of its promotion of a new town in the western part of the county. The area that appears to be the most suitable for the development of a new town (i.e., near Baseline Road, west of Roseville) includes valuable grasslands and wetland habitats, as well as some oak woodlands. While development in this area would presumably draw some development away from other areas, it could affect some of these important habitat areas. As a result, Alternative 3 would fall between the other two alternatives in terms of its potential impacts on sensitive natural habitat areas.

IMPACT CATEGORIES	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3
Air Quality	In most areas of the county, Alternative 1 would result in incrementally lower emissions in 2010 than either Alternative 2 or 3. This is the case simply because development under Alternative 1 would result in the concentration of urban development within cities, thereby promoting more efficient travel patterns than would be likely under Alternatives 2 and 3, both of which would result in increased development in unincorporated areas.	Because development would be more dispersed under Alternative 2, automobile trips would tend to be longer, resulting in more vehicle miles travelled and higher air pollutant emissions. The emissions from Alternative 2 would, nonetheless, differ very little from the other two alternatives.	In spite of the development of a new town that would promote growth conducive to good air quality, Alternative 3 would have worst effect on air quality, primarily because of the length of automobile trips to and from the new town. The emissions from Alternative 3 would, nonetheless, differ very little from the other two alternatives.
Transportation and Circulation			
Trip Generation and Mode Choice	While trip generation would differ very little among the three alternatives (less than 2 percent), Alternative 1 would result in the highest number of person and vehicle trips overall.	Although Alternative 2 would fall in between the other two in terms of total trip generation overall and in the South Placer area, it would result in the highest trip generation in the Auburn-Foothills regional analysis area.	Alternative 3 would result in slightly fewer vehicle trips per person trips than either Alternative 1 and 2. This is principally due to the new town which would have higher transit and carpool usage than surrounding development.
Travel Patterns	Average travel distance would be relatively equal for the three land use alternatives, but would be slightly lower under Alternative 1 than under Alternatives 2 and 3. This is because Alternative 1 would concentrate development within incorporated areas, thereby reducing average trip lengths.	Alternative 2 would fall in between the other two alternatives in terms of average trip length.	In spite of the fact that Alternative 3 would have the lowest vehicle trip generation of the three alternatives, it would have the highest number of vehicle miles travelled due to longer average trip lengths. While work trips generated in the new town would be shorter on average than the rest of South Placer County due to the assumed employment levels in the new town, non-work trips generated in the new town would be longer because a significant number of trips would have to leave for services or activities not available in the new town.
Traffic Congestion	Alternative 1 would have fewer lane miles of congestion (i.e., level of service F) than either Alternative 2 or Alternative 3. While Alternative 1 would generate a slightly higher number of vehicle trips than Alternatives 2 and 3, it would result in fewer vehicle miles travelled due to shorter trip lengths.	Alternative 2 would spread development outside of incorporated areas, thereby increasing average trip lengths and placing more traffic demand on two lane rural roadways in the unincorporated areas. Alternative 2 would, therefore, require higher levels of transportation improvements than Alternative 1 and about the same level as Alternative 3.	Like Alternative 2, Alternative 3 would disperse development outside of incorporated areas, thereby increasing average trip lengths and placing more traffic demand on two lane rural roadways in the unincorporated areas. Alternative 3 would also require higher levels of transportation improvements than Alternative 1.

IMPACT CATEGORIES	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3
Infrastructure			
Water Supply and Delivery	Because Alternative 1 would direct new growth into the county's unincorporated areas, the greatest effect would be on municipal systems. Typically, it is less problematic and less expensive to expand existing treatment and distribution systems than it is to develop new systems (as under Alternative 3) and more environmentally efficient and reliable than developing individual well systems.	The most important consideration in Alternative 2 would be the continued approval of dispersed lower-density development. This type of development often relies on individual well systems for supply, thereby raising questions regarding groundwater quantity and quality.	The new town assumed under Alternative 3 would require the identification of a new raw water source, as well as the development of treatment and distribution facilities. If a surface water source is to be used for supply for the new town, construction of a new transmission facilities would be necessary. If the new town is to rely on groundwater resources, studies would be required to determine if the acceptable yield of the aquifer will safely meet the total projected future demand.
Wastewater	Alternative 1's greatest impact on the wastewater infrastructure would be in the cities, into which it would direct development. Existing community treatment systems would have to be expanded to accommodate development under all of the alternatives, but especially under Alternative 1.	As with water, the most important consideration in Alternative 2 would be the continued approval of dispersed lower-density development. This type of development often relies on individual septic systems for waste treatment. This would raise concerns regarding the capacity of local groundwater resources to tolerate the continued development of septic systems.	Alternative 3 would require the construction of new wastewater collection, treatment, and disposal system for its new town. This could be accomplished in one of two ways. The new town could construct a new collection system to connect to existing collection systems and regional plants, or the developers of a new town could develop an entirely new system, independent of any existing systems.
Drainage	Alternative 1 would ultimately require improvements to the existing drainage and flood control facilities primarily within city expansion areas. Because numerous drainage and flood control studies have been completed for the city areas, the improvements necessary to accommodate incorporated growth are already understood.	The areas expected to absorb additional development under Alternative 2 most likely do not have well-planned, properly-sized storm drainage systems, so extensive infrastructure improvements would likely be required. Since several drainage and flood control studies in the western unincorporated areas of Placer County have been completed recently, planning for drainage and flood control facilities to accommodate future growth under Alternative 2 would not be too complicated. This alternative would require additional facilities to be constructed to accommodate growth in most unincorporated communities.	Because Alternative 3 would provide for development of a new community in an area not currently planned for urban development, it would require additional drainage and flood studies to determine the necessary improvements. The location of the new town would primarily determine the magnitude of potential drainage impacts. Depending on the location, the associated costs of these improvements could be prohibitive since many areas of the county face serious flood and drainage problems. One advantage of this alternative, however, is that resolution of drainage issues could be planned in advance, thereby allowing growth to be directed to areas either without significant problems or to areas where there are relatively simple solutions to drainage problems.

IMPACT CATEGORIES	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3
Fiscal and Financial Issues			
Fiscal Implications	While property tax revenue would cover a higher percentage of costs under Alternative 1, sales tax generation would be low. Under Alternative 1, the County would sacrifice potential sales tax receipts by directing most commercial and industrial development to the cities. Improved revenue-sharing agreements with the cities could, however, make the sacrifice less severe.	Given the assumptions underlying this fiscal analysis, Alternative 2 would be the most fiscally beneficial to the County for two reasons. First, it would be the most aggressive in terms of the County capturing sales tax because it would result in more commercial development. Second, the housing developed under Alternative 2 would, on average, likely be of lower density and higher value than the housing in either of the other alternatives.	Alternative 3, which combines aspects of the other two alternatives, should have a fiscal return that falls in between Alternatives 1 and 2.
Infrastructure Finance	Alternative 1 proposes that cities accommodate the majority of new development, within current boundaries or through annexation, and provide the requisite municipal facilities (i.e., police and fire stations, parks, local administrative offices, local roads, and utilities). There would be efficiencies to providing facilities for growth adjacent to existing urban infrastructure, and distribution networks and new plant construction for water and wastewater service and for other utilities would be limited under this alternative. Similarly, directing growth to the cities would diminish the County's need to expand the capacity of local roads in unincorporated areas. Compared to the other alternatives, Alternative 1 would minimize the County's role as provider of municipal-like facilities.	Alternative 2 would result in greater demand for infrastructure and other public facilities to serve the population in the unincorporated area. This alternative's more dispersed development pattern would not allow for the efficiencies possible with development concentrated around urban existing areas or in a new town. Nonetheless, it should be noted that the larger population and employment base in the unincorporated areas under Alternative 2, compared to the other alternatives, might enable the County to reach service level thresholds for providing facilities such as branch libraries or neighborhood parks, resulting in a higher level of service than would otherwise be the case.	The development pattern under Alternative 3 would combine some of the features of both of the other alternatives. Development concentrated in a new town would provide for efficiencies in local distribution networks and roadways. Furthermore, infrastructure systems in a large-scale, master-planned new town could take advantage of new technologies; this could contribute to reducing the per-capita cost of facilities. Following the same logic, incorporating pedestrian- and transit-oriented features in the new town might reduce the need for the sort of extensive local road networks typical of recent subdivisions accommodating large amounts of development. On the other hand, major arterials and trunk lines for other infrastructure would have to be extended and new capacity created to serve the new town.

IMPACT CATEGORIES	ALTERNATIVE 1	ALTERNATIVE 2	ALTERNATIVE 3
Market Feasibility	<p>Alternative 1 is consistent with the market forces directing development to South Placer County, where the most significant differences among the alternatives are evident in the distribution of development. Much of that difference in distribution is a question of jurisdiction, not location. The primary distinction among the alternatives is the guiding statement about the approach to development policy in unincorporated areas. Under Alternative 1, development would occur under the auspices of the cities, rather than the County, a subtlety that would not likely affect market demand.</p>	<p>Under Alternative 2, more development would occur under the purview of the County. Assuming that the cities and the County would be asked to approve similar types of development, this would make little difference with respect to market demand.</p>	<p>As with Alternatives 1 and 2, the main consideration under Alternative 3 would be which jurisdiction assumed responsibility for sponsoring development. Again, market demand would not likely make a distinction. In addition, Alternative 3 would include a new town that would raise the issue of regional demand for such large-scale types of development. The outlook for a new town in South Placer County depends to some extent on the success of proposals for large-scale development in neighboring counties. If for some reason, new town proposals in Sacramento or Sutter counties were more successful in the approval and development process than the Placer County proposals, then development in South Placer County would not occur at the same rate or in the same form as anticipated, particularly, in Alternative 3.</p>

APPENDIX A

MAJOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

APPENDIX A

MAJOR PROJECT PROPOSALS

A.1 INTRODUCTION

Recognizing that the County's initiation of a comprehensive update of the *General Plan* would prompt some property owners and developers to request specific changes in land use designations, the Board of Supervisors adopted a formal procedure for requesting the consideration of a major development project as part of the plan update process. The County has received several proposals from development interests hoping to see the general plan update redesignate their properties for different land uses than presently allowed. Several of the proposals are extensive enough to be called "new towns," as described under land use Alternative 3 in Chapter 2 of this report; the locations of these proposals are shown on Figure A-1. All the projects are proposed in areas currently vacant or designated for agricultural use, and involve changes in land use covering thousands of acres.

The major project proposals are reviewed in this Appendix to provide property owner and developer perspectives on future growth that the County may wish to consider in conjunction with the three land use alternatives discussed in Chapters 2 and 3 of this report. This review of the proposals first provides descriptions of each, and then discusses the relationship of the proposals to the land use alternatives described and assessed in Chapters 2 and 3.

A.2 PROJECT DESCRIPTIONS

THE HERITAGE AT BICKFORD RANCH

This project includes about 1,950 acres north of Loomis, west of Auburn and southeast of Lincoln. The project site lies among gently rolling foothills and is currently designated for agricultural use on 80 acre parcels; the site is presently subject to a Williamson Act agricultural preserve contract for which a notice of nonrenewal has been filed. The contract will terminate in 1996. *The Heritage* is described by its proponents as a "recreation and residential development" that will consist of about 2,500 dwellings that range in density from estate-size lots of up to 2 acres to high density development of 6-10 units per acre. A 27-hole golf course is proposed along with other recreation amenities such as tennis courts, an athletic club and hiking trails.

While the project could accommodate as many 6,000 residents at buildout, the proponents anticipate that many residents would be retirees, with others expected to be employed executives. The project plan of *The Heritage* suggests that it will support very little employment. Employed residents will most likely commute to job centers in the surrounding communities of Auburn, Roseville and Lincoln. Commuters will benefit from the project's proximity to Interstate 80, less than two miles to the east, and potentially by the Southern Pacific Railroad line that crosses the southern boundary of the site, in the event that the line were to serve future commuter needs by connecting Placer County with Sacramento. Because the project is intended primarily as a very-low-density residential development with only limited commercial development, the proponents do not consider it a new town as envisioned under Alternative 3.

The site is currently vacant grazing land without the public services necessary for the intensity of development proposed. For this reason, a substantial investment in infrastructure improvements will be required, especially for a new sewage treatment plant.

PLACER VILLAGES

Placer Villages is located about midway between Roseville and the Sutter County line in south Placer County, immediately north of the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan Area. This mixed-use project consists of about 22,000 acres, about one-half of which would be devoted to residential land uses. The plan envisions a cluster of "villages" that would include residential, neighborhood commercial, open parks and job centers. In the open space areas between the villages, the plan proposes to allow the continuation of small-scale farming activities. The overall intent of the project is to balance jobs and housing and to facilitate modes of transit other than the automobile. The total population accommodated by this plan would be about 82,000 residents within a time frame of about twenty years.

This project would require substantial new infrastructure improvements, and/or the upgrading of existing facilities, including sewage collection and treatment, water supply and distribution, roads, drainage and schools. Although the preliminary description of the project identifies possible purveyors of water and sewage treatment, it remains unclear which of these alternatives will be pursued. However, the project lies outside the sphere of influence of the City of Roseville and the South Placer Municipal Utility District, meaning that if services are proposed from these purveyors, their respective spheres of influence would need to be amended.

STANFORD RANCH WEST

This project is located north of the Roseville in the Sunset area. The project consists of about 2,800 acres and is planned to accommodate about 11,000 new dwelling units over a time frame of about twenty years. This project is also designed to be a self sufficient community that provides housing, jobs, public facilities, and shopping opportunities. The projected buildout population is about 30,000 residents.

The project site is currently governed by three separate plans. A substantial portion of the site (about 2,200 acres) lies within the Sunset General Plan Area, and is presently designated for future industrial land uses. Another 600 acres lies west of the Sunset Industrial Park and is designated for agricultural use by the Agriculture Element of the General Plan. About 1,500 acres of the project site is also within the adopted sphere of influence of the City of Roseville and is designated for industrial use by the Roseville General Plan. Preliminary information submitted with the project does not indicate how consistency with these plans will be resolved, although it does not appear that annexation to the City of Roseville is contemplated.

Sewage treatment is proposed through annexation to the South Placer Municipal Utilities District, although the project lies outside of its sphere of influence; if sewer service from SPMUD is contemplated, the District's sphere of influence would need to be amended. Other infrastructure improvements would be needed as well, including additional roads, schools and water distribution system. Careful coordination of the regional circulation system will be required, especially with the proposed Villages at Blue Oaks which would be adjacent to the south and west.

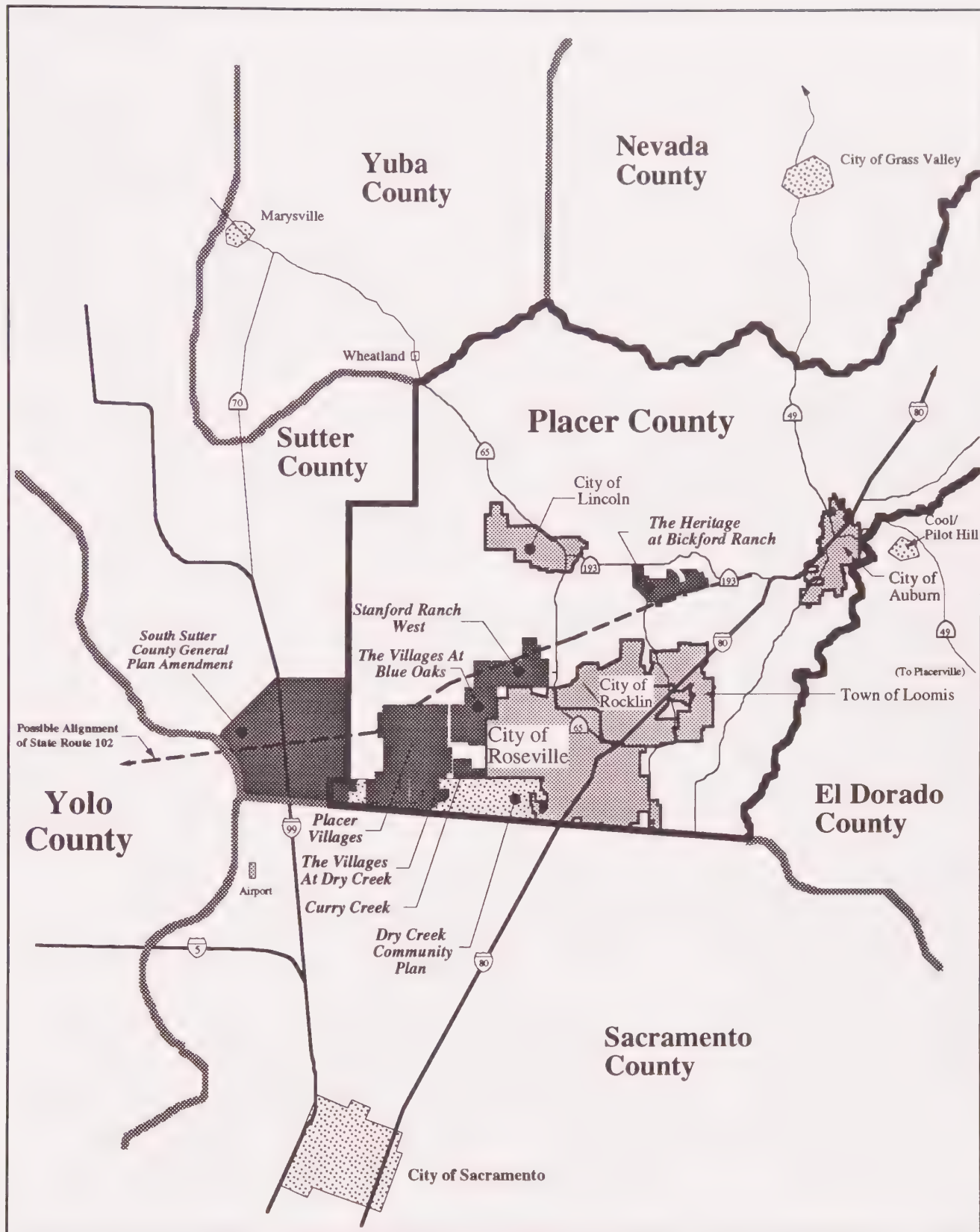


Figure A-1

Areas of Major Development Proposals



0 2,500 5,000 10,000 20,000
Scale: 1" = 20,000'

Date: 1/4/93

Prepared by:

Crawford Multari & Starr

LEGEND:

 Major Development Proposals

SOURCES: Placer County Planning Department
Sutter County General Plan
Sacramento County General Plan
El Dorado County General Plan

THE VILLAGES AT BLUE OAKS

The Villages at Blue Oaks is adjacent to the Roseville city limits, west of Fiddymont Road, one mile north of the Dry Creek/West Placer Community Plan Area. The project consists of about 4,000 acres that is presently zoned for agriculture on 80 acre minimum parcel sizes; about two-thirds of the project area is under Williamson Act contracts with the County. This project is also designed around clusters of mixed-use villages that are intended to balance jobs with housing and to make transit opportunities accessible. Each village includes a variety of urban residential densities (5 - 18 dwelling units per acre), neighborhood serving commercial and office land uses, schools and neighborhood parks. The villages are separated by open space. Land uses that serve all five villages, such as job centers, a proposed regional park and high school, are centrally located among the villages. The project would accommodate about 11,800 dwelling units and a buildout population of about 30,000 by the year 2010. The project is also expected to generate about 6,800 new jobs.

Although The Villages at Blue Oaks is adjacent to the Roseville city limits, it is not within the City's adopted sphere of influence; preliminary information submitted with the project suggests that annexation to the City is not contemplated. This project will also require substantial infrastructure improvements, including wastewater collection and disposal, water distribution, roads, and schools. The project lies outside the sphere of influence of the South Placer Municipal Utilities District.

THE VILLAGES AT DRY CREEK

This project proposal is located in the southwest corner of unincorporated Placer County, adjacent to the Sacramento and Sutter County lines. The project site is approximately four miles west of Roseville and 10 miles north of the city of Sacramento. The site is approximately 2,040 acres and is proposed to be developed with 5,374 housing units, which could accommodate a projected population of approximately 14,500. This figure is based on Placer County's average of 2.7 persons per household. The project is designed as a mixed-use community including residential, retail commercial and business/professional uses, as well as public facilities that include parks, schools, open space, and eventual light rail transit service (an extension of the Sacramento RT light rail system, with a transit station located on the site sometime in the future).

Currently, the project site is predominantly farm land and contains few existing homes. Most of the site is devoted to farming with crops consisting of rice, irrigated pasture and dryland hay or grain. One goal of the project is to provide a mix of land uses that reduce dependence on the automobile while promoting pedestrian and bicycle uses within the community.

The project site lies outside the sphere of influence of the City of Roseville. The Placer County Water Agency is expected to recommend a water treatment facility on the site to accommodate future development. If the facility is not built, potential water suppliers include purveyors south of the Placer/Sacramento County line, and existing water rights and wells found on-site. Various options for the treatment of sewage include temporary use of the Roseville facilities, use of a facility that is expected to be built along the Sutter County line (anticipated for ground breaking by 1996), or the use of other proposed facilities located in planned new communities in Placer and Sacramento Counties.

OTHER PROPOSALS

In addition to the proposals described above, the County received three project proposals that are either substantially smaller than the "new communities" or significantly different in nature. DeAnza-Iowa Hill is a proposal by the DeAnza Land & Leisure Corporation and DeAnza Placer Gold Mining Company covering about 1,530 acres south of the unincorporated area known as Iowa Hill, within the Placer East

planning area. The existing ownership consists of 21 parcels ranging in size from 4.8 to 257 acres. The applicants request that the General Plan Update change the current 80-acre minimum parcel size applicable to their properties to other categories allowing either 36, 40-acre parcels, or a development of approximately 122, 2.3-acre residential parcels clustered on a 280-acre portion of their ownership. No commercial development is proposed.

The third project proposal under this category is the Lakeview Canyon project, which was submitted by High Sierra Properties. This proposal covers approximately 1,800 acres on the boundary between Nevada and Placer Counties, immediately adjacent to southwestern shore of Donner Lake. As proposed, the project would be a planned unit development consisting of 325 acres of single-family and condominium residential units, 1,454 acres of open space and recreation areas, and 15 acres of "ski/mountain sports/bike and equestrian centers." In addition, the project proposes to reserve the opportunity for a potential ski lift for alpine skiing on the east side of the Sierras and to connect alpine and nordic skiing to other areas.

TABLE A-1
SUMMARY OF MAJOR DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS
Placer County

Land Use Category	Bickford Ranch	Placer Villages	Stanford Ranch West	The Villages at Blue Oaks	The Villages at Dry Creek
Residential	895 acres 2,500 units	12,800 acres 34,200 units	1,629 acres 11,146 units	1,699 acres 11,886 units	1,459 acres 5,374 units
Commercial	30 acres	200 acres	214 acres	40 acres	78 acres
Business Park/ Employment	0 acres	1,820 acres	290 acres	204 acres	38 acres
Open Space/Recreation	1,000 acres	3,930 acres	284 acres	1,794 acres	294 acres
Public	25 acres	2,995 acres	1,188 acres	327 acres	172 acres
Total Acres	1,950	22,000	2,800	4,000	2,041
Population	6,000	82,000	30,000	30,000	14,510

A.3 RELATIONSHIP OF PROJECTS TO LAND USE ALTERNATIVES

None of the major development proposals submitted are consistent with the land use alternatives except Alternative 3, which considers new growth areas. The DeAnza development could possibly be considered under the criteria for Alternative 2 (Expansion of Existing Established Communities), but DeAnza-Iowa Hill cannot satisfy the location criterion for new development under Alternative 2 which requires that new development be "... located near transportation/transit corridors, and where public facilities and services can be efficiently provided."

Table A-2 provides a summary comparison of each proposed new community project with the site selection criteria for Alternative 3 as described in Section 2.2 of this report, at least as far as consistency with the criteria can be evaluated at this point. Compliance with some of the criteria cannot be evaluated without a more detailed analysis of proposed sites and project features that is beyond the scope of this report. As Table A-2 indicates, the Bickford Ranch and Placer Villages projects satisfy more of the Alternative 3 criteria for new communities than any of the development proposals.

TABLE A-2
EVALUATION OF NEW COMMUNITY PROPOSALS
Placer County

Evaluation Criteria	Bickford Ranch	Placer Villages	Stanford Ranch	Villages at Blue Oaks	Villages at Dry Creek
1. Access to one or more major arterials	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
2. South and west of Auburn	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
3. Minimizes impacts on agricultural lands	Yes	No	No	No	No
4. Avoids adverse unincorporated area impacts	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown	Unknown
5. Avoids significant groundwater recharge areas	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
6. Minimum one mile from cities	Yes	Yes	No	No	No
7. Near employment centers, but one mile minimum from existing industrial areas	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
8. Two miles or more from Western Regional Landfill	Yes	Yes	No	No	Yes
9. Full range of urban land use types	No	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes

In addition to the general site selection criteria listed in Table A-2, Section 2.2 of this report lists several more detailed standards and conditions for the location and design of new urban development areas under Alternative 3. These standards and conditions are based on the *Performance Policies* (see Table A-3) that the Placer County Board of Supervisors adopted in March 1992. The Board adopted the *Performance Policies* with are intent of helping to identify the type of development and features or characteristics of new development that the County finds acceptable. These policies will be used by staff, consultants, and policy-making bodies to evaluate major new land use proposals submitted as a part of the Placer County General Plan Update. The policies begin to indicate the necessary features of new development which will make such proposals desirable for the County to consider. They are not hard and fast absolute statements to be rigidly applied. The *Performance Policies* instead are broad guidelines to express the County's concerns and interests with respect to major new land use proposals be considered as a part of the General Plan Update analysis of alternatives.

Because of the nature and intent of the *Performance Policies*, County Staff and Consultants did not attempt to analyze each of the major project proposals for their consistency or compliance with them. Such an analysis would have been highly subjective, given the broadness of the policies and the speculative nature of the project descriptions submitted to the County by project proponents.

TABLE A-3

NEW DEVELOPMENT PERFORMANCE POLICIES
(adopted by Placer County Board of Supervisors on March 9, 1992)

1.	New development must address and not detract from the goal of providing significant buffers around urban areas that serve to separate developed areas into identifiable and sustainable communities with distinct identities.
2.	The need for communities to have sufficient <i>critical mass</i> to eventually support a full range of services, including transit services, and be located in areas logical for transit extensions from more densely developed urban areas will be considered in the evaluation of major new development proposals.
3.	The need to permanently preserve and enhance agricultural areas must be considered.
4.	The need to permanently preserve and enhance sensitive open space areas, significant natural areas, and corridors of habitat must also be considered.
5.	New development should, assist with the provision of a variety of housing types with an emphasis on the growing need for an affordable segment of the housing market.
6.	The benefit of creating a jobs-housing balance in terms of air quality, transportation, and quality of life issues should be addressed with new development.
7.	The availability and feasibility of providing water and other necessary services is a critical factor in the evaluation of new development proposals.
8.	The consideration of growth scenarios that help resolve regional problems--transportation, water distribution, air pollution--will be of primary concern to the County.
9.	New growth proposals should not have an adverse economic effect on existing communities (urban centers) nor on the agricultural sector of the County's economy.
10.	Major new development proposals should address why regional employment and housing needs cannot be met within existing cities and communities, or how such new proposals may relieve growth pressures on existing communities that are concerned about rapid growth.
11.	The protection and enhancement of existing industrial areas is a primary concern of the County. New development proposals must not jeopardize the continued development and maintenance of these areas.
12.	Where new development proposals do not adequately address these issues, it should be demonstrated that they will provide some significant benefit to the County.
13.	It is recognized that all of these policies/concerns may not apply to resource-based development such as recreational or resort projects.

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